Two Scenes from a Play*

IGNAZIO SILONE

1.

ULIVA, DON PAOLO, *voice of* DON ZABAGLIONE, *voices of the* CROWD.

DON PAOLO (*anxiously*). Hasn't the knife-grinder passed yet?

ULIVA. No. Just listen to what's happened. The new printing-press . . .

DON PAOLO. Has the paper been printed? Is it ready for distribution?

ULIVA. The new printing-press too was discovered and sequestrated this morning at dawn.

DON PAOLO (*starting*). Annina, Murica—have they been arrested?

ULIVA. They were not there.

DON PAOLO (*stricken*). Sequestrated. The new printing-press destroyed too.

ULIVA. It was Romeo told me, he was in a hurry and gave no other details. He was in a hurry, he had the impression he was being shadowed. If they haven't got him, he may be here shortly and he'll tell you about it himself.

DON PAOLO (*almost to himself*). So the war will break out and there won't be a single public protest from us.

ULIVA. We can hardly ask them to postpone the war just because you are not yet able to sabotage it.

These two scenes are from "And He Hid Himself," an unpublished play by Ignazio Silone in which the author makes use of some of the characters who appear in "Bread and Wine," in particular, Don Paolo Spina; and situations which are at times analogous, but never identical with those in the novel. Silone describes the play as having been inspired by "Bread and Wine"; it is not, however, in any way an adaptation or dramatization of the novel.

The reader ought to know that the place is Italy; and the time just before the Ethiopian War. Don Paolo and Uliva are both members of the underground movement, and Murica, who appears in the second of the two scenes, has been condemned to death for betraying the movement. When, at the beginning of the second scene, he comes to see Don Paolo, it has already been decided that Don Paolo is to be Murica's executioner. Hence Don Paolo is surprised to see him and at first takes his visit to be a plea for mercy.

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DON PAOLO. Like blindfold sheep the soldiers will go to the slaughter.

ULIVA. Well, after all, maybe that's the least painful way of dying. An increase of consciousness, mark my words, always means an increase of suffering. A humanitarian like you should think that over.

DON PAOLO. It would mean intensifying pain only if our consciousness were by nature condemned exclusively to contemplation and were powerless to change the course of events.

ULIVA (*abandoning for the first time his tone of indifference and almost of boredom, and expressing himself with energetic conviction*). I know what kind of events you think would prove the victory of conscience, that is, revolutions; but if you examine them closely, they prove exactly the opposite. Believe me, my dear boy, exactly the opposite. But I don't advise a good fellow like you to examine them too closely. (DON PAOLO *wants to interrupt, but* ULIVA *cuts him short.*) Let me speak. I've still got something else to tell you, namely that the soutane suits you very well; remarkably well in fact; congratulations. Don't you think it would be a good idea to make it obligatory, together with the tonsure, for all functionaries of the Party?

DON PAOLO (*jokingly*). Celibacy too?

ULIVA. Of course. All the more so since celibacy doesn't exclude the rest, not even polygamy; rather the contrary.

Through the closed bedroom window re-echoes the sound of applause from a crowd gathered in a public meeting. DON PAOLO *opens the window. The voice of an orator can be heard distinctly, if somewhat attenuated by distance.*

VOICE OF DON ZABAGLIONE. Descendant of Rome eternal, O thou, my people! Tell me, who was it brought civilization and culture to the Mediterranean and to all that was then known of Africa?

VOICES OF THE CROWD. We did!

VOICE OF DON ZABAGLIONE. Tell me further, I beg thee, who brought civilization and culture to the whole of Europe, even to the foggy shores of England, and built cities on the very soil where savages, together with wild boars and stags, had grubbed for food?

VOICES OF THE CROWD. We did!

VOICE OF DON ZABAGLIONE. Tell me again, I implore thee, who discovered America?

VOICES OF THE CROWD. We did! We did! We did!

VOICE OF DON ZABAGLIONE. Tell me yet again, I entreat thee, who invented electricity, the radio, and all the conveniences, wonders and beauties of modern life?

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VOICES OF THE CROWD. We did!

VOICE OF DON ZABAGLIONE. And lastly, tell me, if you please, which people was it that went all over the world to dig mines, build bridges, make roads, drain swamps?

VOICES OF THE CROWD. We did! We did! We did!

VOICE OF DON ZABAGLIONE. Well, now I shall explain to you the origins of our wretchedness. Whatever civilization there is in this world of ours, the best part of it is the work of our hands. But the other nations have robbed us of it. However, after centuries of humiliation and injustice, Divine Providence has at last sent our country the Man who will see to it that we get back everything that belongs to us and that the others have taken from us.

VOICES OF THE CROWD. To London! To London!

OTHER VOICES. To New York! To Philadelphia!

OTHER VOICES. To Sao Paulo! To the Avenida Paulista! To the Avenida Angelica!

OTHER VOICES. To Buenos Aires!

A VOICE. To New York! To Forty-Second Street!

OTHER VOICES. What is there at Forty-Second Street?

THE VOICE. You'll see what there is! Christ be our helper, to Forty-Second Street!

VOICE OF DON ZABAGLIONE. First-born heir of immortal Rome, O thou, my people. . . .

DON PAOLO *slams the window to, cutting short the orator's voice.*

DON PAOLO (*angrily*). What a play-actor! What a clown!

ULIVA. And yet, in ten or fifteen years' time, if as may very well happen there is a shuffle of dictatorships, you will step right into the shoes of Don Zabaglione. What I mean to say is, you will inherit his function as a windbag.

DON PAOLO. You know, Uliva, witticisms, if they are to be witty, should contain some wit; otherwise, they are vulgar banalities.

ULIVA. Of course, there'll be a certain difference. Unlike Don Zabaglione, you'll believe what you say. I have always admired your unlimited capacity for believing.

DON PAOLO. And as for your cynicism, I have never taken it seriously. Otherwise I couldn't understand why you should have stayed with us all these years, and why you are with us still. It's certainly not for the sake of convenience.

ULIVA. That's where you're wrong; it happens to be just for the sake

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of convenience. What I mean is, I've stayed with you and your friends because you are persecuted, and in a certain sense that happened to suit me. As you see, for all my cynicism, it's a sentimental reason, almost frivolous in fact. Now, however, I feel myself mature enough to part company.

DON PAOLO. Are you so convinced that our ideal is to exchange the role of victims for that of victimizers?

ULIVA. It's not your ideal, no; but it's undoubtedly your destiny.

DON PAOLO. Destiny is the alibi of resigned weaklings.

ULIVA. It would be too easy if we could give it the slip just by shutting our eyes to it.

DON PAOLO. And I maintain that nothing will ever induce us to sacrifice the essence of our ideal to the success of our ideal.

ULIVA. Nothing? If the word destiny isn't to your liking, you can put the word history in its place.

DON PAOLO. Our history hasn't yet been written.

ULIVA. You haven't read it, but it has already been written for a long time. Or else, you probably have read it without ever realizing that it was your own history and that of your friends.

DON PAOLO. One can add new pages to history.

ULIVA. By copying the old ones, and adding spelling mistakes.

DON PAOLO (*in a tone of distaste*). You know, Uliva, quibbling is no argument.

ULIVA. You've always tried to run away from real arguments. I'll give you a real argument now: every revolution, every one of them, without a single exception, began as a movement of freedom and ended up as a tyranny. There was never yet a revolution that escaped this doom.

DON PAOLO. That's not true, but even if it were true, we ought to say: the revolutions of the past have turned to ashes, we will make one that will keep its promise.

ULIVA. Illusions, illusions. Yes, maybe we'll have economic changes, thanks to which, just as we now have state railways, state quinine, state salt, state matches and state tobacco, in the same way we shall then have state bread, state shoes, state shirts and state underpants, state potatoes and fresh state peas. Will that be progress, from a technical standpoint? Let's be generous and admit it will. But this technical innovation will fall into the hands of a privileged caste which will profess official shibboleths and will use every means, from the cinema to terrorism, to stamp out all trace of heresy and tyrannize the people. The present inquisition will be succeeded by a Red inquisition, the present censorship by a Red

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censorship. Instead of the present deportations there will be Red deportations, of which dissident revolutionaries will be the favorite victims. Just as the present bureaucracy identifies itself with patriotism and exterminates all its opponents, denouncing them as traitors bought by foreign gold, in the same way your favorite bureaucracy will identify itself with Labor and Socialism and persecute everyone who goes on thinking with his own head, denouncing him as a paid agent of the so-called class enemy.

DON PAOLO (*seized by anger, takes hold of* ULIVA *by his coat lapels and shouts in his face*). But why must that be our destiny? Why can there be no way out? Are we hens cooped up in a hen-roost? Why should we have to remain in the bondage of an unchangeable fatality? Why should a state, a society that we want to put at the service of man's brotherhood, be doomed before it has even begun to exist?

ULIVA (*pushing* DON PAOLO *away with a calm and energetic gesture, makes him sit down and for the first time smiles at him in a friendly way*). Come, Pietro, don't let's quarrel. I assure you I didn't come here to bicker with you. This is the last time we'll ever see each other, and it would be a pity to part in a squabble.

DON PAOLO (*his suspicions aroused*). Why the last time?

ULIVA (*continues without replying*). We've known each other for many years, and in spite of everything, I've got a certain amount of esteem for you. For many years now I've been watching you engaged in a sort of chivalrous joust with life, or with the creator, if you prefer: the struggle of the creature to break down his limitations. All this is very noble; I say it without irony, yes, it is very noble, but it requires a degree of ingenuity in which I am lacking.

DON PAOLO. Man has no real existence except in so far as he fights against his own limitations. Man raised himself above the beasts from the moment in which he began this struggle. He turns back into a beast the moment he gives it up; he turns back into a sheep, or a pig, or a parrot, or a lion, or a hyena, according to temperament. The moment he gives it up. Uliva, we mustn't capitulate. Of course, man is free not to be free; he is free, that is, not to be a man. And it's not easy to be a man. But a man like you, Uliva. . . .

ULIVA (*interrupting*). He who finds resignation intolerable and revolution illusory has still got one way out that many are afraid of. And yet perhaps it is the only way out that is really worthy of man.

DON PAOLO (*suddenly alarmed*). Uliva . . .

ULIVA (*continuing without taking any notice of him*). You spoke to me once about a secret dream of yours. You expressed it in home-made terms: you would make a soviet out of the Fucino plain and nominate

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Jesus Christ president of the soviet. The idea perhaps mightn't be a bad one if the son of the Nazareth carpenter were really on this earth still and could exercise that function in person; but, when the nomination was made and note duly taken of his absence, you would have to find a substitute for him. And we in this country know how the representatives of Jesus begin and how they end; eh, and don't we know it. The poor newly-converted Negroes and Indians of the missions don't know it, but we know it only too well.

2.

DON PAOLO, LUIGI MURICA.

DON PAOLO *and* MURICA *remain standing for some time motionless, face to face, staring fixedly at each other.* DON PAOLO *appears surprised that* MURICA *is standing up to his scrutiny with so much assurance and without flickering an eyelid.*

DON PAOLO (*in a decided and impatient tone, motioning to the valley path*). Let's walk a pace or two.

MURICA (*not moving*). I want to speak to you.

DON PAOLO (*sternly*). We have really got nothing to say to each other. Your idle prating doesn't interest me, and for my part all I have to give you is a brief and curt Party message.

MURICA (*forcing himself to an ironical tone*). A message . . . in my back?

DON PAOLO (*suddenly abandoning all prudence*). If you like to put it that way.

MURICA (*proffering a closed envelope*). Don Benedetto asked me to give you this letter.

DON PAOLO (*sarcastically, leaving* MURICA *with outstretched hand*). So you thought it a bright idea to come to me armed with a letter of introduction? But it was superfluous because I know you very well by this time, only too well in fact.

MURICA *wants to tear up the letter, but* DON PAOLO *snatches it from him; he then opens and reads it and remains sunk in thought for a while.*

DON PAOLO (*entering the garden, followed by* MURICA). Do you know what the letter says?

MURICA. No. I closed it the moment it was handed to me.

DON PAOLO. Have you known Don Benedetto for a long time?

MURICA. Since childhood. We're even distant relations.

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DON PAOLO. Well, anyhow, please spare me now the tale of the "heart-rending" scene. I know the sort of thing: you went to him, threw yourself at his feet, beat your breast and repeated Mea culpa, wept and confessed. Isn't that what happened? And you finally departed with the firm and pious intention of returning to confess after each new lapse. (*Changing his tone*). Murica, confessors and psychiatrists can allow themselves the luxury of mercy, but a revolutionary party, and you ought to know this much because you have belonged to one, a revolutionary movement, if it's not to betray its mission, in certain cases has got to be merciless to the point of cruelty. Was it Don Benedetto that made you come up here?

MURICA. Don Benedetto wanted to have you come to his place but I preferred to come here.

They both sit down at the table.

DON PAOLO. To be frank, I didn't think you so audacious.

MURICA. I assure you, it's not exactly audacity. Perhaps it's courage.

DON PAOLO (*stern and aggressive*). Courage? Murica, you're mistaken. A traitor can be foolhardy, rash, imprudent, anything you like, but not courageous. Courage is a peculiar attribute of honesty.

MURICA. Maybe, Pietro, you were born upright, honest, pure and therefore, by virtue of nature, also courageous. My courage, on the other hand, if I may be allowed to speak of it, isn't natural; it's always, as in this very moment, a victory over fear: because by nature I'm timorous and weak. It's only very recently that I've begun to understand what courage in your sense really is, I mean courage as an aspect of honesty.

DON PAOLO. Maybe you think it courageous honesty to sneak into the trust of your comrades and then betray them to the police?

MURICA. My self-denunciation to Annina, at a time when no one even dreamt of suspecting me, was a difficult, painful and supreme act of courage.

DON PAOLO (*after a short pause*). The perniciousness of individuals of your sort lies precisely in this double-facedness, in this inextricable alternation of sincerity and falsehood, good intentions and cynicism, audacity and irresistible, uncontrollable panic. So you confessed everything to Annina, did you? All right; but afterwards? What about the subsequent arrests, the arrests yesterday and this morning? Who was at the bottom of them?

MURICA. I don't know. From the day I spoke to Annina I never moved beyond the four walls of Don Benedetto's house. (*Short pause*). I arrived at Don Benedetto's place by sheer accident that very same day. Driven to despair by the irreparable past, I fled across the countryside without realizing how nor where I was going, torn by the feeling that I

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must commit some bloody act of expiation, suicide for instance, or assassination of some high police officer; when all of a sudden I found myself face to face with Don Benedetto. "You here!" I exclaimed in surprise; but he had every reason to be amazed at my bewilderment, because without noticing it I had reached a point far up above Rocca and there I was standing right at the entrance to his garden. I wanted to run away, but he held me back and took me into his house. And there he kept me till today. Pietro, you know Don Benedetto because you were a pupil of his for several years, and you know he's not the sort of man to lend himself to the parody of a religious ceremony such as you described a little while ago. And as for me, since the distant days of my confirmation I've never darkened a church door. If you only knew how much easier I would have found a sacramental confession. Instead, these days I've spent in Don Benedetto's house are going to remain in my life like a painful visit to a hospital, like a very serious radical surgical operation. Maybe, Pietro, you have never known the real bitterness of evil, nor the dark despairing prison of the irreparableness of evil. . . .

DON PAOLO (*in an undertone, and as though talking to himself*). The little I know, I too have learned through pain.

MURICA. You know, Pietro, you mustn't think I've come here to act the part of the magdalen contrite, redeemed and satisfied. My soul is still too full of misery. And although Don Benedetto explained and proved to me that no matter how loathsome and detestable evil always is, it's sometimes needed in order that good may spring from it; even though he went so far as to say that, without this almost deathly crisis that I've just been through, I should most likely never have matured nor grown to manhood; nevertheless, this good that I've bought and that I now should settle down to enjoy, this deepened awareness, this belated moral sentiment, all leave a bitter disgusting true sense of the word, "prope humo," close to the earth, and therefore conveying a repugnant putrid taste of worms. Ah, as long as I live I think I shall never lose my horror at this tragic dependence of good on evil: and if I'm speaking of it now it's only in order to add that, compared to this sense of mournful intimate lasting bitterness, all my other cares shrink into futility; even, for instance, my curiosity to know what you intend doing with me.

DON PAOLO. To be frank, Murica, if you're being sincere—and I'm trying hard to believe that you are—then I simply don't understand you. What on earth made you come?

MURICA. When you've been through hell and you come back to the land of the living, it's your absolute duty to tell the others what you've seen. If you go through hell the flames scorch your hair and it stays scorched forever afterwards, but that mustn't stop you from telling what you've seen. You know, Pietro, the movement of which you are a leader has some alarming aspects that you may not be aware of. Do you remem-

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ber a passage, in a thing you wrote recently, about a man who by painful degrees became aware of his humanity? Romeo gave me that article of yours meaning me to print it; but when I was setting it up in type, that passage stopped me. I could get no further, and I began thinking.

DON PAOLO. You told me so already the last time we met in Agostino's stable.

MURICA. Now here's the point I'd like you to think over: two years ago when, by sheer accident as you know, I came into contact with the clandestine movement and shortly afterwards joined it, I was incapable of understanding even the literal meaning of those words of yours. In the movement I found myself, consequently, from the very beginning in the false position of the gambler staking a much higher sum than he can really afford. If I'm talking like this to you now it's mainly in order to ask you: do you think my case is an isolated one? Don't you think a good many people stake far more than they possess?

DON PAOLO. No one ever knows beforehand how much he really possesses. But we're not concerned with other people just now. If you felt immature, why did you join a movement full of risks, like ours?

MURICA. I think people rebel against the existing order of things for two diametrically opposite reasons: if they are very strong-minded and if they are very weak. By a strong-minded man I mean a man who has risen above the bourgeois order of things, repudiates it, scorns it, fights against it and wants to put a more equitable society in its place. But I was a poor timid awkward lonely provincial student in a big city; I was incapable of facing the thousand petty hardships of daily life, the little everyday humiliations and rebuffs. I was twenty years old and—forgive me for mentioning this detail—I hadn't yet ventured to approach a woman. And that thought kept me far busier and tormented me far more than the destiny of the world. I realize now that I let myself be drawn into the clandestine movement just because it enabled me to disguise with a proud mask of rejection the resentment I harbored towards the society from which I was shut out, and which nevertheless at the bottom of my heart I envied, longed for and feared. If a weakling rebels against the existing order of things. . . .

DON PAOLO. In the revolutionary party he can find a virile brotherhood that gives him strength.

MURICA. He can also find in it something more convenient. Don't forget that the clandestine form of the revolutionary movement offers a weakling the important and deceptive advantage of secrecy. He lives in sacrilege and shudders at it, but in secret. He stands outside the abhorred and greatly-dreaded law, but that's something the guardians of the law don't know. His repudiation of the established order remains private and secret, as in a dream, and for this very reason it's likely to assume a radi-

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cal bloody catastrophical form; but his outward behavior remains unchanged. In his everyday affairs the weakling remains as timid, as helpless, as faint-hearted as before. He conspires against the government in the same way that he often strangles his father in dreams at night, only to sit down beside him to breakfast the following morning.

DON PAOLO. Until a banal incident reveals his double life.

MURICA. Then he's panic-stricken. Terror-stricken.

DON PAOLO (*after some reflection*). Did they beat you when you were in jail?

MURICA. Yes, but I assure you the beatings could add nothing to the fear which had seized me the moment I was arrested. Besides, my father had often beaten me much more violently when I was a youngster.

DON PAOLO. Your father?

MURICA. The moment I was arrested I realized I had staked more than I possessed. The challenge I had flung down was out of all proportion to my strength. In giving my personal data I couldn't remember when I was born, nor my mother's maiden name. I signed that statement without reading it. If they had written that I pleaded guilty of robbing and assassinating my grandmother, I should have signed without hesitation.

DON PAOLO. They let you out of jail and then began the pangs of remorse; et cetera et cetera, with all that followed.

MURICA. No. As a matter of fact, on my release from jail I was amazed to discover that I felt not the slightest remorse.

DON PAOLO. Not the slightest remorse?

MURICA. My satisfaction at having escaped so lightly left no room for anything but a vague fear of being found out. I kept asking myself: "What will Annina say if she discovers my deceit? What will my companions say?" My visit to jail had considerably enhanced my reputation, and I was terrified of losing it.

DON PAOLO (*sarcastically*). Of course, I quite understand, honor above all.

MURICA. But little by little, as I became reassured that it was relatively easy to betray without being detected, my fear of disgrace and punishment began to give way, strangely and unexpectedly, to an increasing horror of impunity. I began to ask myself this question: if a more expert technique of betrayal could guarantee that I should never be found out, would that make evil any easier to bear? I began to find it monstrous that the idea of good should be inseparable from the concept of utility and linked up with a promise of reward or punishment. So what's useful is therefore good? But useful to whom? To the prisoner anxious at all

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costs to recover his freedom? To the government party? To the opposition party? To the ruling class? To the oppressed class? And if the idea of good and evil be inseparably bound up with that of a sanction—reward or punishment—then what is good and what is evil in a society in which virtue is punished and vice rewarded? And if technical competence in the craft of evil were to eliminate all risk and sanction, would this mean also that all distinction between good and evil would thereby be effaced? In the end, how it happened I don't know, but these reflections left me no peace. My whole being was seized by a new, painful, implacable tension, such as I had never known before. I simply couldn't and wouldn't resign myself to impunity. I hadn't believed in God for many years, but I suddenly began longing, with all the strength of my soul, for Him to exist. I began to invoke Him, crying into the void. I needed Him urgently in order not to succumb to insanity and chaos. The most frightful punishment imaginable seemed to me infinitely preferable to placid acceptance of a world in which the problem of evil could be solved by a little cunning and dexterity of execution. If I finally decided to confess everything, taking no thought of the consequences, it was with the deliberate intent of setting up order once again between the world and myself, of restoring the ancient boundary between good and evil, without which I couldn't go on living any more. Now. . . .

DON PAOLO (*who for some time has been anxiously watching the valley and the mountain path*). Luigi, it's getting late, we'd better go inside. Luigi, thank you for coming. Will you stay here till tomorrow?

MURICA. If you want me to. You know, I've still got a lot of things to tell you.

DON PAOLO. I do want you to.

They both leave the garden and enter the inn just as the LANDLADY *appears in the doorway.*

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The Case for Responsible Literature

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

ALL WRITERS of bourgeois origin have known the temptation of irresponsibility: for a century this has been traditional in a literary career. An author seldom establishes any connection between his works and their cash returns. On the one hand, he writes, sings and laments: on the other, he is given money. These are two apparently unrelated facts; the best he can say for himself is that he is being given a pension for lamenting. He feels himself to be in the position of a student with a scholarship rather than in that of the worker who receives the price of his labour. The theorists of Art-for-Art and Realism have helped to confirm him in this opinion. Has it been noticed that they have the same object and the same origin? The principal aim of the author who follows the precepts of the former is to produce works which are of no use: they seem beautiful to him almost by virtue of their complete gratuitousness and lack of foundation. Thus, he places himself on the fringe of society, or, rather, consents to figure in it exclusively as a consumer: exactly like the scholarship student. The realist is also a willing consumer. As for production, that is a different matter: he has been told that science is not concerned with utility, and he aspires to the sterile impartiality of the scientist. We have been told often enough that he 'leans over' the class of society which he wishes to describe. He leans over? Where is he then? In mid-air? The truth is that, uncertain of his social position, too timorous to revolt against the bourgeoisie which pays him, too lucid to accept it unreservedly, he chooses to pass judgement on his time, and so is persuaded that he remains outside it, as an experimenter remains outside an experimental system. Thus the disinterestedness of science converges with the wantonness of Art-for-Art. It is not by chance that Flaubert is at the same time a pure stylist, a whole-hearted lover of form, and the father of naturalism; it is not by chance that the Goncourts prided themselves both on their powers of observation and on the artistry of their writing.

This heritage of irresponsibility has sown confusion into the

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minds of many writers. They suffer from an uneasy literary conscience, and no longer quite know whether it is laudable or grotesque to write. Formerly, the poet thought of himself as a prophet, and that was respectable; later, he became an accursed pariah, and that was still endurable. But today he has fallen from the ranks of the specialists, and it is not without a certain uneasiness that he writes 'profession—man of letters' after his name in hotel registers. Man of letters: the combination of words is in itself enough to discourage one from writing: it brings to mind an Ariel, a Vestal, an *enfant terrible,* or an inoffensive maniac comparable to an exercise fiend or a numismatist. All this is rather ridiculous. The man of letters writes while others are fighting: one day he may be proud of the fact, feeling himself to be the recorder and guardian of ideal values; the next day he may be ashamed, finding that literature resembles a kind of special affectation. With the bourgeois, who read him, he is conscious of his dignity, but when confronted with the workers, who do not read him, he suffers from an inferiority complex, as we saw at the Maison de la Culture in '36. This complex is certainly at the root of what Paulhan calls *terrorisme,* and it led the Surrealists to despise the literature which had called them into being.

After the last war a peculiar lyricism appeared; the best and purest writers publicly confessed that which could most humiliate them, and expressed satisfaction when they had brought on themselves the opprobrium of the bourgeoisie: they had produced writings which, in their consequences, somewhat resembled action. These isolated attempts did not prevent words from depreciating more every day. There followed a crisis in rhetoric, then a crisis in language. At the eve of this war, the majority of literary men were content to be nothing but nightingales. Eventually, some writers appeared who carried this aversion from production to the extreme: outdoing their predecessors, they considered that they would not be doing enough by publishing a book which was merely useless; they maintained that the secret aim of all literature was the destruction of language, and that to attain this end it sufficed to speak without saying anything at all. This inexhaustible silence was fashionable for some time, and the Messageries Hachette distributed to railway bookstalls manuals of Silence in the guise of voluminous novels. Today, things have come to such a pass that there are writers who, when reviled or punished for having hired out their talents to the Germans, have been known to register grieved astonishment. 'Why,' they say, 'is one responsible for what one writes?'

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We do not want to be ashamed of writing, and we have no desire to speak without saying anything. Let us hope—for ourselves, at any rate—that we will never reach that stage: for no one can reach it. All that is written has a meaning, even if the meaning is far from that which the author wished to imply. For us, the writer is neither a Vestal nor an Ariel: he is 'in it up to the neck', whatever he writes, branded, committed, even in the most distant withdrawal. If at certain times he uses his art to fabricate knick-knacks of sonorous nonsense, even that is a sign: it means that there is a crisis in literature and, hence, in society, or else it means that the ruling classes have goaded him into frivolous activities without his knowledge, for fear lest he should escape or swell the ranks of the revolutionaries. Flaubert, who railed so bitterly against the bourgeoisie, and who imagined that he had withdrawn completely from the social machine—what is he to us but a talented property-owner? And does not the meticulous art of Croisset suggest his comfort, the solicitude of a mother or a niece, a well-ordered existence, a prosperous business and cheques regularly drawn? It requires but a few years for a book to become a social fact which is consulted as an institution and which is admitted as a matter for statistics; only a short while needs to elapse before it merges with the furnishings of a period, with its clothes, its hats, its means of transport and its food. The historian will say of us: 'They ate this, they read that, they dressed thus.' The first railway, the cholera, the revolt of the Canuts, Balzac's novels, and the rapid progress of industry rank equally in characterizing the July Monarchy. All this has been repeated again and again since Hegel: we want to draw practical conclusions from the statement. Since the writer has no possible means of escape, we wish him to cover his epoch exclusively; it is his only chance; his time is made for him, and he is made for it. Balzac's indifference in the days of '48 and Flaubert's frightened incomprehension of the Commune are to be regretted *for the writers' own sakes*: for there lies something which they have missed for ever. We want to miss nothing in our time: there may be other epochs more beautiful, but this is ours; we have only *this* life to live, in the midst of *this* war, perhaps, of *this* revolution. It must not be concluded from this that we are preaching a kind of populism: quite the contrary. Populism is a child of old parents, the wretched offspring of the last realists: it is yet another attempt to sneak away from the mess. We are convinced, on the contrary, that one *cannot* sneak away. Were we dumb and immobile as stones, our very passivity would be an action. The abstention of one who devotes his life to writing novels about the Hittites entails taking up some kind of attitude. The writer is

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situated in his time: each word has its reverberations, each silence too.

I hold Flaubert and Concourt responsible for the repressions which followed the Commune, because they wrote not a single line to prevent them. It may be said that it was none of their business: but was the case of Calas the business of Voltaire? the sentence on Dreyfus the business of Zola? the administration of the Congo the business of Gide? Each one of these writers, in some particular circumstance of his life, weighed up his responsibility as a writer. The occupation has taught us ours. Since by our existence we influence our time, we must decide that this influence shall be deliberate. Again we must specify: it is not usual for a writer to concern himself, in his own small way, with shaping the future. But that is a vague, conceptual future, embracing the whole of humanity and on which no definite light can be cast: will history come to an end? will the sun be extinguished? what will be the condition of man under the socialist regime of the year 3000? We leave these dreams to the anticipatory novelists: it is the future of *our* epoch which should be the object of our concern: a limited future, which can hardly be distinguished from the present—for an epoch, like a man, is primarily a future. It is formed by its current toils, by its undertakings, by its more or less long-term projects, by its rebellions, by its struggles, by its hopes: when will the war end? how will the country be re-equipped? how will international relations be planned? what will be the social reforms? will the forces of reaction triumph? will there be a revolution, and what form will it take? This is the future we choose for ourselves, and we desire no other. Nevertheless, some writers have less immediate aims and take a longer view. As they pass amongst us, they seem to be far away. Where are they, then? With their great-nephews, they turn to look at the vanished era which was ours and of which they are the sole survivors. But they err in their calculations: posthumous glory is always based on misunderstanding. What do they know of those nephews who are to come and pick them out from amongst us? Immortality is a dreadful alibi: it is not easy to live with one foot beyond and one foot before the grave. How can current affairs be disposed when viewed from such a distance? How can one stir oneself to battle, how can one rejoice in victory? All values are equalized. They gazed unseeingly at us: we are already dead in their eyes; so they return to the novel which they are writing for men whom they will never see. They have allowed their lives to be stolen from them by immortality. We write for our contemporaries, we do not wish to view our world with eyes of the future—for that would be the surest method of destroying it—but with our fleshy eyes, with

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our real, mortal eyes. We do not wish to win our case by appeal, and we have no use for a posthumous rehabilitation: it is here and in our lifetime that cases are won or lost.

Yet we do not seek to establish a literary relativism. We have little liking for pure history. And besides, does pure history exist outside the manual of M. Seignobos? Every epoch discovers an aspect of the condition of humanity, in every epoch man chooses for himself with regard to others, to love, to death, to the world; and when a controversy arises on the subject of the disarmament of the F.F.I. or of the aid to be given to the Spanish Republicans, it is that metaphysical choice, that personal and absolute decision which is in question. Thus, by becoming a part of the uniqueness of our time, we finally merge with the eternal, and it is our task as writers to cast light on the eternal values which are involved in these social and political disputes. Yet we are not concerned with seeking these values in an intelligible paradise: for they are only interesting in their immediate form. Far from being relativists, we assert emphatically that man is absolute. But he is absolute in his own time, in his own environment, on his own earth. The absolute which a thousand years of history cannot destroy is *this* irreplaceable, incomparable decision, which he makes at *this* moment, in *these* circumstances; the absolute is Descartes, the man who escapes us because he is dead, who lived in his time, who thought in his time from day to day, with limited data, who formed his doctrine in accordance with a certain stage reached in science, who knew Gassendi, Caterus and Mersenne, who in his childhood loved a shady young woman, who was a soldier and got a servant girl with a child, who attacked not the principle of authority in general but the authority of Aristotle in particular, and who rises out of his time, disarmed but unconquered, like a landmark; and the relative is cartesianism, that coster's barrow philosophy, which is trotted out century after century, in which everyone finds whatever he has put in. It is not by chasing after immortality that we will make ourselves eternal: we will not make ourselves absolute by reflecting in our works desiccated principles which are sufficiently empty and negative to pass from one century to another, but by fighting passionately in our time, by loving it passionately, and by consenting to perish entirely with it.

Translated by NATALIA GALITZINE

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THE DEAD IN MELANESIA

Beside the crater and the tattered palm
The trades, the old trades, sight their local psalm;
Buth their man-god in his outrigger,
The boars' tusks curling like a nautilus,
Fell to the schooners cruising here for niggers.
To the Nature here these deaths are fabulous;

And yet this world works, grain by grain, into the graves
Till the poor *ronin* in their tank-sealed caves
Are troubled by its alien genius
That takes uncomprehendingly the kites, the snow—
Their decomposing traces. And the conquerors
Who hid their single talent in Chicago,

Des Moines, Cheyenne, are buried with it here.
The including land, mistaking their success,
Takes the tall strangers to its heart like failures:
Each missionary, with his base and cross,
Sprawls in the blood of an untaken beachhead;
And the isles confuse him with their own black dead.

RANDALL JARRELL

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Art and Anxiety

ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS

ALTHOUGH IN some respects incredible, Little Red Riding Hood is obviously a good story, and its simplicity recommends it as an introduction to the necessarily rather speculative discussion of art and anxiety which follows. This tale of the wolf and the grandmother is primitive, folkish and fantastic, and the proper terms for its explication may seem irrelevant to higher forms of art, particularly those that are intellectual and realistic. But I shall go on to suggest that to be effective, those intellectual and realistic elements in imaginative literature must have a double reference, both to the world of outer reality and to the kind of inner situation with which Little Red Riding Hood deals, and that this second kind of reference is the essential one for art.

If it is difficult to suppose that a wolf in a night-cap, especially after it began to speak, could be taken for one's grandmother, it is easy to suppose that one's grandmother—or even one dearer than a grandmother—could be taken for a wolf. According to the modes of their time and place and social station, parents make children human and social. They impose cultural institutions not only on young minds, but on young emotions, and muscles and nerves. This is an intimate and unremitting process, carried on over a long period of time. Even the best of parents often do it with force and in anger. They also love. But to a very small child the moments of anger are quite separate from those of love, and when his strongest impulses are blocked for incomprehensible reasons by what can seem to him only an unconditionally evil personal force, he responds in his rage with equally unconditional statements of hate and the wish to kill, that is, to remove. He "means" these statements, just as the parent "means" his anger.

Such wishes, conscious and even put into words, are not blind instincts or part of a fund of original sin invested in all of us, but conscious and understandable responses to a social situation. Nevertheless, they are not easy for the child to deal with as he grows older. In his love and dependence and desire to be good, he accepts the parent's authority pretty much in the parent's terms, and within that

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scheme can find no place for those negative destructive feelings which were not only organized and a part of his developing personality, but very difficult to separate from his inner sense of the parents. As a result, by processes now familiar to us, these feelings get repressed or detached. But since they still have meaning in terms of the real social situation, they remain active, and cause anxiety and a sense of guilt.

What a relief to an anxious child the thought of a wolf can be! It was not, after all, the parental image to which that uncomfortable complex of rage and fear had been attached, but a wolf in the grandmother's guise. Although it is inconceivable that a child should want to kill its grandmother, it is in the nature of a wolf to do so, and hence bears thinking about. And if the wolf ate up the beloved grandmother to whom the propitiatory child was carrying a basket of goodies, how much more appropriate to fear and hate it, although for a healthy child the thought of a wolf is not really very frightening except when the wolf is also one's grandmother. But even the wolf, insofar as he is frightening, is killed and disposed of, not by the child, but by a kindly woodcutter, who is, like the parental figures, a protector against just such dangers as the wolf represents.

The importance of this kind of analysis, which I shall return to later on, is not to show that an emotionally satisfactory story satisfies emotional needs, some of them unconscious, and that these unconscious elements are much more clearly understood as a result of Freudian techniques. Most critics would agree to this. What they question is the value of Freudian techniques in the positive and discriminating judgment of art as art. As Lionel Trilling pointed out in a recent number of the PARTISAN REVIEW, the acts of every person are influenced by the unconscious, and if the writer is often neurotic so is the scientist or business man. What is important about the writer is his "power of controlling his neuroticism. He shapes his fantasies, he gives them social reference." The writer "works in the raw material we all have" and what is significant is what he does with it, and that in turn depends on his artistic gifts. The artist, unlike the dreamer, dominates his illusion, and makes it serve the purposes of closer and truer relation with reality. And in an earlier article in the *Kenyon Review* Mr. Trilling had said that Freudian psychology, by its founder's own admission, "can do nothing toward elucidation of the nature of the artistic gift, nor can it explain the means by which the artist works—artistic technique."

Actually, in recent years, as a result of innumerable case studies, a good deal of light has been thrown on the differing unconscious determinants of such different professional interests—when they

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have a strong and successful drive behind them—as those of the inventor, the surgeon, the promoter, the merchant, the banker and the scholar. The early lives of these types have as different "profiles" as those outlined in psycho-somatic medicine for typical sufferers from diabetes or asthma or angina. And these careers do not result from the direction given by inborn talents or interests to instinctual drives we all have in common. If enough of the individual past can be recovered, talents can be traced to emotional attachments and inhibitions resulting from very specific conditions and events of childhood. Studies of wolf-boys and of neglected children show that intelligence itself is a social product, a result of the child's treatment during the first two years. The idiot is a "private" person.

Brill's essay on poetry as an oral outlet, though doctrinaire and literarily naive, is not baseless. Though the imaginative writer's interests are no more determined by unconscious elements than those of the scientist and merchant, they do not find expression as soon or so directly in the world of fact and practical affairs. But if we are learning much more about the artist's nature and about the rather special way by which he reaches "reality" and deals with it, this is not, as Mr. Trilling rightly contends, the important question in the evaluation of art. In the orthodox Freudian journals art has been treated symptomatically as dreams have been, although in the case of works of art it is seldom possible to practise the prolonged free-associational examination which the "deep" analysis of a dream requires. The emphasis has been on the artist rather than the work of art, as it so often is in academic scholarship, and the effect is reductive, as it is in the simpler Marxist criticism, making the particular qualities of a work of art effect-signs of the psychic or social conditions under which it was produced, of the Oedipal conflict or the contradictions of capitalism.

An artist's changing relations with those who bring him up, never free from conflicts, determine his character and show in his work. Nor can his work fail to reflect, directly or indirectly, the social conflicts of his time. But it is not primarily to find indications of these inner and outer conflicts that people read books and look at paintings. That is why psychiatrists study dreams, but dreams are private, and they have—according to Freud—only one condition to satisfy, that they should permit the sleeper to go on sleeping. But though the artist creates primarily to please himself, his work is art to the extent that it is communal, that it has social meaning, and for this there are many conditions to fulfill, and many kinds and degrees of success in fulfilling them, though we may note that in doing this art uses many

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of the symbols and the mechanisms of displacement, condensation, splitting and the like which Freud defined in his study of the dream. But unlike the dream art is a positive, consciously-directed social accomplishment, like that of the scientist, the producer, the builder.

Although it may be incidentally interesting to know what made a man a scientist, what unconscious needs, displaced affections, symbolic associations, we need only understand his particular science to evaluate the success of a scientific experiment. The critical references are not to the scientist's inner life but to the conditions of the experiment and the hypothesis which it was intended to establish, as the judgment of a diplomatic negotiation takes into account the world situation at the time and the purposes the negotiators were trying to accomplish. So, we may say, a critic need take into account only artistic means and purposes in evaluating, which is his primary concern, the success with which an artist fulfills the conditions of his art in terms of that art.

But when all this is said, and the critic has protected his domain against the encroachments of the psychologists, the difficulties that have always beset aesthetic inquiry are still not solved. For just what are the conditions that art must satisfy, and what objective references have we for deciding its success in satisfying them?

In the analysis of the tale of Little Red Riding Hood, we saw with what considerable economy and ingenuity it met the conditions that were set for it by certain situations to which it had reference in the unconscious psychic life of its young listeners. The wolf had to replace the grandmother and yet be quite clearly separated, as a person, from the grandmother. The child should be involved in the experience, and yet in such a way that she should not feel responsibly implicated in the grandmother's death. The wolf should be killed by a protective parental figure. A good deal has been made of other significant details, such as the red hood, but they need not detain us here.

Although the tale uses dream symbols, it is not like a dream, but has the completeness, coherence and unity of a work of art. The author has shaped his material, given it significant form, brought it to a satisfactory conclusion. Obviously his own unconscious has a part in the process, but insofar as he controls the telling consciously he is not guided by Freudian doctrines but by stories he has heard as a child and by previous successes and failures in arousing a youthful audience. And it is only on this level that criticism can operate unless it takes into account those psychic conditions that ultimately determine the success or failure of a story of this kind. We cannot

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judge the form of a work of art unless we see how that form is related to its function. We can feel that a story is successful, and make a good many pertinent observations in comparing it with other stories, following critically and empirically the path that the writer follows, partly consciously, partly intuitively, in the experimental mastery of his art. But we cannot very fully or profoundly explain a story's success without knowing actually what it is that a story does.

Although imaginative literature is often informative, this is not its distinguishing characteristic, and a simple story like Red Riding Hood does not, in any sense, lead its hearers to a knowledge of relationships. Its symbols evoke responses which are essentially conditioned reflexes, and a knowledge on the child's part of the relationship of stimulus to response is neither the cause nor the result of his being moved by the story, nor will a statement describing any such relationship affect very much its operations, any more than a psychiatrist's pointing out, early in an analysis, the probable cause of a phobia, do much to lessen its intensity.

A story of this kind gains its effect by awakening reflexively, with symbols of a particular kind, unconscious impulses. And any description or definition of the artistic experience which fails to take into account these significant references to an inner reality will necessarily seem limited or mysterious, especially since it must also recognize that the most significant references in art are not to an external reality beyond the bounds of the individual work of art. Such limitations are found even in the formulations of Deweyans and philosophical naturalists who might be expected to be most sympathetic to a functional and psychologic interpretation of art.

In "A Natural History of the Aesthetic Transaction" which Eliseo Vivas contributed to the symposium, *Naturalism and the Human Spirit,* he differentiated art from morals, science, and religion, wherein we think of causes and consequences, and wherein the object of the experience is, so to speak, "a moment connected with a wider complex of moments in a transitive chain that goes on indefinitely." The aesthetic experience, on the contrary, is "an experience of rapt attention which involves the intransitive apprehension of an object's immanent meanings in their full presentational immediacy." Rapt attention there certainly is, when a story is well told, and we know a good deal about the means by which that state of raptness is created, but what are these immanent meanings and how do they draw to themselves the emotions they arouse? In this "intransitive" situation, since movement cannot go beyond the bounds of the self-contained and self-sufficient work of art, it must necessarily go down. Through

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giving up of oneself to the artist as through the giving up of oneself to the analyst a transfer occurs which attaches to the present and actual emotional meanings proper to an earlier and now buried experience.

2.

To say that art gives expression to repressed material of great emotional significance is merely a beginning, of course, and to stop there is to remain with the earlier Freudian interpretation of art against which so many objections have properly been made. If art is merely a substitute gratification of repressed desires in such disguised form that they can get by the censor, then art is essentially the same as a dream, even though it may, by its realism and coherence, seem to take account of external reality. And criticism is largely a matter of penetrating the disguises and discovering what is really behind them. It has no criteria for the work of art as such, except the extent of its revelation; its approach is scientific, cognitive, referential.

But such an approach was inadequate artistically because it was inadequate psychologically. Freud so related sex, libido and love that family and social relationships could exist only at the expense of instinctual gratifications; the role of the super-ego was negative and repressive; and although social activities could be understood as projections, displacements and transformations of instinctual and unconscious needs, the stages of individual psychic development were considered fixed, phylogenetically, for all persons, and no adequate account was taken of the reciprocal influence of individual cultures and particular social circumstances in shaping the development, both conscious and unconscious, of the individual.

Such ideas have been under extensive revision for years on both sides of the Atlantic, and the value of psychiatry in understanding the literary process need no longer be judged by the earlier inadequacies of Freudian doctrine. It seems to me, for instance, that in discussions of anxiety, particularly in the English psycho-analytic journals, by writers like Melanie Klein, Ella Freeman Sharpe, W. D. R. Fairbairn, Edward Glover and Marjorie Brierley, we not only understand the positive psychic role of social influences, but can analyze the conditions that art which has the profoundest effect must meet in its use of both conscious and unconscious materials. We can therefore relevantly judge it, not for what it reveals, but for what it does.

As an approach to these ideas can we analyze a more sophisti-

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cated piece of literature, with much more social and intellectual content, in the same terms as Little Red Riding Hood? In Richard Wright's *Native Son* the decisive event is the murder of a young white girl by a Negro, and the burning of her body in the furnace, a very unlikely subject, one might think, for a young Negro to choose for a propagandist novel. But the selection of this scene was determined by a forgotten incident of great emotional significance for the writer, and its imaginative development expressed both hatred for the girl, as white, and strong sexual desire for her, unconsummated even in the imagination except through the symbolic rape of murder. Such impulses are dangerous psychically as well as socially, and cause much anxiety. They cannot always be expressed so frankly. In much art which is predominantly defensive they are so deeply buried that they can hardly be discerned. When such impulses are dramatized it must be in the immediate prospect of punishment for their agent. This is not to make the fantasy socially acceptable; the need for punishment is just as deeply motivated as the impulse to crime, and is inseparable from it. The explanation for our penal system lies in the psychic needs of the public which developed it rather than in its social accomplishments. Our demand for the punishment of the Germans is not unconnected with the excitement with which we read the detailed accounts of their crimes.

In Richard Wright's case, however, the legal prosecution of Bigger Thomas was not enough, because of the author's feelings that the law, on another level, represented a threat to him in its injustice toward Negroes, a kind of injustice that Communism might be expected to abolish. And as in Little Red Riding Hood, even though Bigger Thomas acted as agent for the writer and the reader, it was necessary for us to be separated from him responsibly. This was done, not so much by making him a different kind of person, as by showing, in the manner of the naturalist novel, that Bigger's crime was a natural consequence of his social circumstances, and therefore as appropriate and understandable as the wolf's eating the grandmother. Although the author is a Negro and most readers are white, the psychic situation is the same except that Bigger's being a Negro makes our conscious separation from the murderer easier. And despite its social doctrines the book makes full emotional and imaginative use of the deeper prejudices against Negroes and the part they play in dream fantasies, of women especially. But the woman in the novel is punished, too, of course.

Although he did not analyze the novel in this fashion, Dr. Frederic Wertham has recently published a brief report on conversations with

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Richard Wright in which he uncovered some unconscious determinants of the material in *Native Son*. In trying to judge the extent to which artists do consciously shape their material, we should notice Dr. Wertham's report that "the root experiences intimately related to the key scene of the novel were unavailable to his consciousness at the time of the novel and at the beginning of our experiment when he reflected on the sources of his inspiration for the creation of the Dalton household," and that "comparison of the long-forgotten memories presented in this study with the self-explanation of *Native Son* in 'How Bigger Was Born' show the latter is a conscious rationalization."

Both *Native Son* and Little Red Riding Hood may be compared to what Miss Sharpe calls the "cautionary tale." A simple example is: If you go into the jungle, a lion may eat you. This seems too simple. After all, lions do eat people, and a child may pleasantly excite himself with thoughts of such a remote danger. But we know what a lion meant in the case of little Hans, reported by Freud and later discussed by Anna Freud in her book *The Ego and the Mechanism of Defense*.

In his fantasies little Hans was attended by a tame lion,* very fierce in demeanor. When grown-ups of his acquaintance first saw it, they were terrified, but their terror changed to wonder when they found the beast completely submissive to Hans's command. Although Hans was not aware of the connection, tracing down associational patterns made it clear that the lion was his father, and that the fantasy gave relief by letting Hans imagine himself in complete control of a person whose behavior actually filled him with confusion and anxiety. And if we assign "jungle" or "bush" its usual meaning in Freudian symbolism, the cautionary sentence, "If you go in the jungle a lion will eat you," may be read as a threat from the father in an Oedipal situation.

This assigning of symbolic or derived value to events in outer reality that appear to have their own quite adequate tensions and excitements becomes far more plausible if we consider the way children are brought up in our civilization. In the early years parents intervene at all points in children's experience of the outer world. Prolonged battles, full of emotion on both sides, go on over feeding and toilet training. A child is taught to avoid situations of danger,

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* I find that, writing from memory, I combined two of Miss Freud's cases. Hans' father became a horse. Another little boy tamed the lion, but the point is the same.

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not by experiencing the practical consequences, but by parental restraint, enforced by punishments, far more complicated in aspect than a fall or a cut finger. The same prohibitions and punishments are used against aggressive and disrespectful behavior. Since the reasons are equally incomprehensible, it is not surprising that a child should not at first distinguish between the withdrawing of his hand from a hot iron and from his penis, and that because of this early association accidents and the excitement of physical dangers often replace as "screen memories" painful incidents and excitements of quite another kind.

But obviously, as we noted in examining Little Red Riding Hood, the relation of parents to children is not chiefly one of coercion and restraint. The child not only finds within the family his comfort, his security and his happiness, but he becomes humane and social by constant imitation of those about him, by making their ways his own. He repeats not only the actions and words of other members of his family, but also their emotional responses to objects and incidents with which he has had little direct experience. Even their forbidding what he wants to do becomes part of him, and conscious or unconscious inhibition takes the place of external restraint. It is very difficult to say at what point this imitated material becomes his own, to distinguish between original impulses and the remembered actions of others, between original thoughts and the echoes of what others have said, a difficulty that makes it easy to understand paranoia and other phenomena of projection, in which one's own thoughts and wishes are mistaken for the words and deeds of other men.

Peculiar to the individual is the selection and organization, conscious or unconscious, of this social material, which is deeply involved emotionally with the people from whom it is adopted. And some of it, for reasons discussed earlier, becomes repressed. Attached to these repressed impulses are the parental aggressions against them, which make the parents seem "bad objects." These feelings occasion anxiety and a sense of separation which leads in turn to a desire to be identified with the parents in their "good" aspects, to be reunited with them in security and love.

Repressed destructive feelings are disintegrative, not only because they split up the relationship with loved persons, but because they isolate a part of the self. Love is integrative, and of this integration, which is social in character, the specifically sexual is only a part and seldom a dominant part. Premature or excessive sexuality in children results from emotional insecurity, and in later life sexuality can be used as a social instrument, as Alexander R. Martin has said,

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"in the service of degradation, humiliation and deprivation." The fundamental pattern is one of conflict and reconciliation, of separation and return, of man's fall and return to grace. It is the pattern of analytic therapy, with the emotional transfer to the therapist, and with the re-integrative recovery, if the analysis is successful, of lost parts of the self.

But we also know from analysis that within this pattern many variations and complexities are possible in the attempts to deal with repressed material, or with internalized "bad objects" which are profoundly needed but also associated with pain and separation, as the breast may be after weaning. W. R. D. Fairbairn shows how guilt develops as a moral defense against the terrible aspects of parental figures. Going further than little Hans, a child may convert an original situation in which he is surrounded by bad objects into a new situation in which the objects are good and he himself is bad. We may observe different forms of this process in the relations of Kafka and Kierkegaard to their fathers, and in the way in which Dostoevsky "converted" the cruelty with which he was treated by the Czar. And in our time when terribleness outside us reinforces the terrible within, and loss of faith in social reform has, for many, wiped out this hopeful defense against anxiety, it is easy to understand why a preoccupation with sin and guilt has reappeared and why grace has been sought in a supernatural union rather than in identification with political movements or with socialist reconstruction. Analysts think that such defense may take other forms, as in a sadistic, demonic identification with bad objects, or in a despairing masochistic giving up to them, which results in what Freud called the death wish, or an attempt to be free of them in both their needed and repellent aspects, by attributing magic strengths to one's own body and products,—excrements, for instance, on an infantile level, or thoughts and words later on.

The artist's forms of defense against anxiety, or relief from it, are highly varied and operate on every level from that of popular fiction which fantasies over and over again the solution of conscious problems and the physical reunion with the beloved, to those profounder works which deal symbolically and indirectly with buried materials, and whose value and meaning have been the subjects of so much aesthetic controversy.

Countering the fears aroused by destructive impulses and fantasies are the efforts at restitution, reconstruction and reparation. The wholeness and integrity of the work, on which Eliseo Vivas put such emphasis, its separateness and identity, marked off as with the black

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lines around a Rouault figure, the way it returns upon itself instead of merging with the world outside, the realism and living quality of the persons and things recreated in it—all these qualities strengthen both creator and audience against ideas of dissolution and dismemberment, ideas which are also usually expressed or implied by the work, but not always, when an artist is as deeply repressed as, for instance, was Cezanne. And in the design of a work, in its metrical or musical or architectonic recurrences, there is not merely the soothing, hypnotic maternal quality which Brill has discussed, and which facilitates emotional transfer, but also a constant fulfilling of promises, a relieving of uncertainties and tensions, in the happy return of the expected and desired, in the predictable completion of patterns, in the revelation of something unknown, which, as the unknown, had aroused emotions proper to our own attempts to recover and master detached and antagonistic elements within ourselves.

A similar analysis can be made of humor, which is only in part the permitted social gratification of sexual or sadistic impulses. Dominantly it is an attempt to relieve anxiety by minimizing the threatening aspects of the strange, the aggressive, the difficult and the obscure, and all that recalls early painful oppressions of a paternal character. But this humor works only under special conditions. Its depreciations must not threaten the real social and emotional interests of its hearers, and it needs more than most forms the reassurance of being shared, of being approved and laughed at, to relieve the fears caused by the cruelty and destructiveness it usually also contains. That its points should be objectively valid, that is, should be true—is also a reassurance, but by no means essential, any more than external plausibility was for the effectiveness of Little Red Riding Hood.

For in humor, as in other literary processes, public and intellectual material derives its significance from its relation to inner conflicts and from the way in which it socializes its materials, and only secondarily from the factual or theoretic soundness of what it says. Art is a form of activity, not a form of truth, and special structures and relationships are aspects of its functions and of the special conditions under which it works. It seems to me that as a result of psychiatric studies we are about to understand the values and forms of art much more profoundly than we have been able to before. What I have said here, of course, is abstract and hypothetical, and can be established only by further work in psychiatry, and by much patient and appreciative re-examination of works of art themselves. The social and psychological aspects of art, as of individual experience, cannot really be separated, except for convenience of discourse, and such a

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reinterpretation of art—though my emphasis here has been psychological—is not inconsistent with a social interpretation of art, even of the Marxist variety, but is necessary to it.

THE MOUNTAIN AFTERGLOW

Afterglow goldens the
peak its rock beak glows

like raw blood and red
red is the snowfield

beneath it inevitably my
thoughts go to Christ's

blood which our weakness
drinks and to the blood

of another useless hope-
less war then from its

blackness the heart cries
to the peak O give us a

word speak us a word
but back to our valley

comes only the sun's
dying glow as so softly

so delicately the bright
rock and snow fade into

night and night clouds
fold dark on the stars.

JAMES LAUGHLIN

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New Year's Eve

To Edna Phillips

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

THE EVENING of the profound holiday drew much strength and unhappiness from such depths as the afternoon, the week, the year of unhappiness, and the lives that long had been lived. This secular holiday is full of pain because it is both an ending and a beginning. In this way, it participates in some of the strangeness and difficulty of both birth and death.

On this memorable evening and at this New Year's party, the idiom which prevailed might perhaps be said to be that of unpleasant cleverness. The party had not been the object of careful thought, nor had it been inspired by the emotion of celebration. Hence some of the guests hoped vaguely until the afternoon darkened that they might be asked to come to some other party. This hope communicated itself like uproarious laughter as some of the guests spoke to each other during the winter afternoon. Each in his tone of voice unknowingly communicated the sense that this party was not the party which, in the depths, the psyche desired like first prize.

Grant Landis was the only human being who did not have this feeling about the party. He labored all afternoon in the office of Centaur Editions, a small publishing house of which he was one of the owners, and when anyone called him upon the telephone or visited him, he invited each one to come to the party too. He was a human being who possessed an infinite interest in other human beings and an inexhaustible energy, an energy so great that it triumphed over reality when it was dismal by moving forward to fresh arenas of frenzied activity.

Early in the afternoon, Shenandoah Fish, a youthful author of promise, entered the office and Grant immediately invited him to the party. Shenandoah had come to the office because he had little else that he wanted to do, because he wanted to converse with Grant Landis, and because he hoped to hear more praise of his small book, which Centaur Editions had published in October.

Eager to hear more about his small book, the invitation to the

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of responsibility, which always weighs heavily on the Labor Party, will be particularly strong when the prospect ahead is of dragging an exhausted country through another two years of war, and that there will be some pulling of punches when the last-minute struggle begins. Of course one doesn't know what piece of trickery the Conservatives have in store this time. The election will be more or less a straight fight between Labor and the Conservatives. Both Common Wealth and the Communists are likely to increase their representation, but not to a significant extent, and the come-back which the Liberal Party is attempting is not likely to be much of a success. The Liberals have a big asset in Beveridge, but they no longer represent any definite block of interests or opinions, and they advocate several different policies which cancel out. It is thought that they may win another ten or twenty seats, but that their main achievement will be to split the Labor vote in town areas and the Conservative vote in rural ones.

I have only been home a week, and I cannot make up my mind whether the Russian mythos is as powerful as it was before. A good observer who has been in England throughout the past three months gives me his opinion that pro-Russian feeling is cooling off rapidly and that former sympathisers are much dismayed by Russian foreign policy and by such episodes as the arrest of the 16 Polish delegates. Certainly the press is less adulatory than it was before, but this does not necessarily indicate a change in popular feeling. I have always held that pro-Russian sentiment in England during the past ten years has been due much more to the need for an external paradise than to any real interest in the Soviet regime, and that it cannot be countered by an appeal to the facts, even when these are known. A thing that has much struck me in recent years is that the most enormous crimes and disasters—purges, deportations, massacres, famines, imprisonment without trial, aggressive wars, broken treaties—not only fail to excite the big public, but can actually escape notice altogether, so long as they do not happen to fit in with the political mood of the moment. Thus it is possible *now* to rouse a certain amount of indignation about Dachau, Buchenwald etc., and yet before the war it was impossible to get the average person to take the faintest interest in such things, although the most horrible facts had had abundant publicity. If you could have taken a Gallup poll in 1939 I imagine you would have found that a majority, or at least a very big minority, of adult English people had not even heard of the existence of the German concentration camps. The whole thing had slid off their consciousness, since it was not what they then wanted to hear. So also with the USSR. If it could be proven tomorrow that the Russian concentration camps in the Arctic actually exist, and that they contain eighteen million prisoners, as some observers claim, I doubt whether this would make much impression on the Russophile section of the public.

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The Warsaw business last year went almost unnoticed, And I don't see why the Russian behavior towards Poland should suddenly begin exciting indignation now.

It may be, however, that public opinion is beginning to alter for other reasons. One thing which, in a small way, probably affects working-class opinion is that latterly there has been more contact than before between British and Russians. From what I can hear, the British prisoners liberated by the Red Army in eastern Germany often bring back anti-Russian reports, and there has been a trickle of similar reports from the crews of the ships which go to Archangel and the air crews which were for a while operating in the USSR. What is probably involved here is the question of relative cultural levels, to which working-class people are usually very sensitive. In Germany I was struck by the attitude of the American G.I.s towards the hordes of Russian forced laborers, and of the British and American prisoners in liberated camps towards their Russian fellow-prisoners. It was not that there was hostility, merely that the western industrial worker, confronted with a Slav peasant, immediately feels him to be less civilized—which he is, according to the western worker's standards. However, this kind of thing takes effect on the big public very slowly, if at all. Meanwhile, so far as I can judge, pro-Russian sentiment is still strong and will be an appreciable factor in the general election. A lot of people remark that a real stand against Russian aggression in Europe can only be made by a government of the Left, just as, when Germany was to be opposed, it had to be under Conservative leadership.

I was not in England for V-Day, but I am told it was very decorous —huge crowds, but little enthusiasm and even less rowdiness—just as it was in France. No doubt in both cases this was partly due to the shortage of alcohol. The ending of the European part of the war has made extraordinarily little difference to anybody. Even the blackout is almost as black as ever, since few of the street lights have been restored and most people don't possess any curtains other than blackout curtains. The basic petrol ration has been restored and there is a scramble for cars which are being sold at fantastic prices, but as yet the streets are comparatively empty. Certain wartime amenities, such as British Restaurants and the excellent day nurseries at which working mothers can leave their children, are now to be scrapped, or at least there is talk of scrapping them, and already people are signing petitions against this. In general, people of leftwing views are in favour of continuing wartime controls (there were even some murmurs against the discontinuance of 18 B), while the Right makes play with such slogans as "No more bureaucracy." The ordinary people in the street seem to me not only to have become entirely habituated to a planned, regimented sort of life, in which consumption goods of all kinds are scarce but are shared out with reasonable fairness, but actually to prefer it to what they had be-

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fore. Clearly one can't verify such impressions, but I have believed all along that England has been *happier* during the war, in spite of the desperate tiredness of some periods. It is usual to say that war simply causes suffering, but I question whether this is so when the casualties are small, as they have been for this country on this occasion. What happens in total war is that the acute suffering—not merely danger and hardship but boredom and homesickness—is pushed on to the armed forces, who may number ten percent of the population, while the rest enjoy a security and a social equality which they never know at other times. Of course there is also bombing, the break-up of families, anxiety over husbands and sons, overwork and lack of amusements, but these are probably much more tolerable than the haunting dread of unemployment against a background of social competitiveness.

Having come back from the continent I can see England with fresh eyes, and I see that certain things—for instance, the pacifist habit of mind, respect for freedom of speech and belief in legality—have managed to survive here while seemingly disappearing on the other side of the Channel. But if I had to say what had most struck me about the behavior of the British people during the war, I should point to the *lack* of reaction of any kind. In the face of terrifying dangers and golden political opportunities, people just keep on keeping on, in a sort of twilight sleep in which they are conscious of nothing except the daily round of work, family life, darts at the pub, exercising the dog, mowing the lawn, bringing home the supper beer, etc., etc. I remember that during the worst moment of Dunkirk I was walking in a park with a friend, and I pointed out to him that in the behavior of the crowds there was absolutely nothing to indicate that anything out of the ordinary was happening. Exactly as usual people were pushing their prams to and fro, young men were chasing girls, games of cricket were being played, etc. He said gloomily, "They'll behave like this until the bombs start dropping, and then they'll panic." Yet they didn't panic, and, as I noted at the time, they preserved the ordinary pattern of their lives to a surprising extent even amid the disorganization caused by the bombing. As William Empson puts it, "Three fathoms down the sea is always calm." I think it is well established that this time there has been far less feeling either for or against the war than there was last time. It is true that this time the number of men registering as Conscientious Objectors has about doubled itself, but I don't think this is significant, because, unless one actually wanted to be a martyr, being a C.O. has not entailed either ill-treatment or social ostracism this time. It has been made easy for C.O.s to choose non-military jobs, and the number refusing all kinds of national service has been tiny. One has to remember that last time the organized labor movement was more or less anti-war for the first two years, there was strong feeling against conscription, and by the end several parts of the country were not far from revolution. There were

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also military mutinies all over the place as soon as the fighting stopped. This time nothing of the kind has happened, but neither has there been anything like the insane enthusiasm of 1914, which I am old enough to remember, nor has hatred of the enemy gone to the same lengths. This time people haven't—except in the columns of the newspapers—referred to the Germans as Huns, they haven't looted German shops or lynched so-called spies in Hyde Park, and children's papers haven't been decorated with pictures of Germans wearing the faces of pigs: but on the other hand there has been less protest against the proposals to dismember Germany, make use of forced labor, etc., than there was against the Versailles settlement. Considering what has happened in Europe, I think it is worth noticing that almost no English people have changed sides in this war. At most a few dozen individuals, mostly with a prewar Fascist history, have quislingized. Towards the end of the war literally hundreds of thousands of Russians, Poles, Czechs and what-not were fighting for the Germans or serving in the Todt organization, but no British or Americans at all. It is the same with the development, or rather lack of development, on the home front. Never would I have prophesied that we could go through nearly six years of war without arriving at either Socialism or Fascism, and with our civil liberties almost intact. I don't know whether this semi-anaesthesia in which the British people contrive to live is a sign of decadence, as many observers believe, or whether on the other hand it is a kind of instinctive wisdom. It may well be that it is the best attitude when you live among endless horrors and calamities which you are powerless to prevent. Possibly we shall all have to develop it if war becomes continuous, which seems to me a likely development in the fairly near future.

I understand that with the ending of the war you are rearranging your foreign contributions, so this will be my last letter in this particular series, which started over four years ago. It doesn't seem worth making any winding-up remarks, since I did something of the kind in your last issue but one. I would merely like to finish up by telling you and your readers how much I have enjoyed writing these letters. In among the lunatic activities on which I have wasted the war years, they have given me a wonderful feeling of getting my nose above water. And finally, I think you all will agree that a word of praise is due to the censorship department, which has let these letters through with remarkably little interference. All the best.

GEORGE ORWELL

(Mr. Orwell's London Letter will appear in every third issue of PARTISAN REVIEW as part of a series of letters from several European capitals. From time to time Mr. Orwell will also contribute special articles to the magazine.)

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London Letter

DEAR EDITORS,

I have spent the last three months in France and Germany, but I must devote this letter to British affairs, because if I touch directly on anything I saw abroad I shall have to submit the letter to SHAEF censorship.

The forthcoming general election is causing a fair amount of excitement, and many Labor Party supporters seem honestly confident that their party will win. Churchill is considered to have decided on an early election because this will probably mean a low poll. Millions of soldiers and others will still be away from home and, though not strictly speaking disenfranchised (the soldiers can vote by proxy, for instance), out of touch with their local political organizations. The votes lost in this way will be mostly potential Labor votes. I have predicted all along that the Conservatives will win by a small majority, and I still stick to this, though not quite so confidently as before, because the tide is obviously running very strongly in the other direction. It is even conceivable that Labor may win the election against the will of its leaders. Any government taking office now is in for an uncomfortable time, and a Left government especially so. Wartime controls will have to be continued and even tightened up, and demobilization will inevitably be slower than the general public expects. Then there is the coal problem, which is simply not soluble until the mines have been nationalized and then renovated by a process that will take several years. For the time being any government, of whatever color, will be obliged both to coerce the miners and to let the public shiver through the winter. There is also the impending show-down with Russia, which the people at the top of the Labor Party no doubt realize to be unavoidable, but which public opinion has not been prepared for. And above all there is India. The Conservatives might be able to stave off an Indian settlement for one more term of office, but a government calling itself Socialist could hardly attempt to do so, while at the same time it is very unlikely that Attlee, Morrison and the rest of them can make any offer that the Indian Nationalists would accept. Some people consider that a government taking office just at this moment does not risk much unpopularity, because the security and semi-prosperity produced by the war will still be operative, and that the really difficult time lies about two years ahead, when there will be full demobilization with consequent unemployment and a calamitous housing shortage. Nevertheless I believe that the fear

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party came as a major pleasure. However, he tried to conceal his delight, saying that he had promised to spend the evening with two of his friends, Nicholas O'Neil and Wilhelmina Gold.

"Bring them too," said Grant, as Arthur Harris, the other owner of the press, entered the office, returning from lunch. Since nine o'clock in the morning Arthur had heard more and more strangers invited to the party. Hearing of this fresh addition, he had difficulty in concealing the annoyance which rose to his face. However, he greeted Shenandoah with a warmth which broke through his annoyance, asking the youthful author what he was writing now? Another dialogue?

The mixed and complicated character of this question, as it struck Shenandoah, can be understood only by mentioning the nature of the youthful author's first work. It was a satirical dialogue between Freud and Marx in which Freud comes to agree that capitalism is organized anal eroticism when Marx agrees in return that the oedipus complex is an oppression rooted in the ownership of the means of production. In asking Shenandoah if he was writing a new dialogue, Arthur did not intend to make an ironic remark. But it was ironic. And the irony, though inspired by Arthur's annoyance at the new additions to the New Year's party, had an objective foundation in the fact that the youthful author's first work might well be an accident and not the proof of a lasting gift. Although Shenandoah recognized the irony, and sought to disregard it, he misunderstood its true cause. He thought that Arthur supposed him capable of composing nothing but satirical dialogues, a misunderstanding inspired in him by the deep fear that it might be true.

Nonetheless Shenandoah said nothing in reply and decided to return to the rooming house where he lived. When he had closed the glassed door of the office, Arthur criticized Grant for his indiscriminate invitations. Since both of them were intellectuals, both resorted to theories about the nature of a party and about each other's characters. A party at which too many of the guests are strangers is likely to fall flat, Arthur argued.

"There is enough alienation in modern life," he said roundly, "without installing it in the living room."

"Everyone is interesting," Grant replied and it was true that he found everyone interesting.

"Everyone is interesting to you," said Arthur harshly, "because you talk all the time —"

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"Spontaneity," said Grant, recognizing with laughter this description of his character, "strangers bring spontaneity to a party."

The argument continued thus, full of abstractions, but motivated nonetheless by a conflict which was founded upon two different feelings about life. And as they argued and as they irritated each other, elsewhere in other boxes of the great city old conflicts were renewed and new ones quickly engendered. Grant's wife, Martha Landis, quietly quarreled with her mother-in-law upon the telephone. Frances Harris, Arthur's wife, became more and more angry because Arthur had not come home on time.

"He is holding a theoretical conversation somewhere," she said to herself.

Meantime Shenandoah was visited by his friend Nicholas O'Neil, who was unhappy and who suffered from a cold, the outcome perhaps of the fact that this was his birthday, or the outcome of his depression that he was twenty-five years of age and not yet famous. Nicholas and Shenandoah had become annoyed with each other, arguing about the merits of a poem. Nicholas in his annoyance and depression declared sullenly that he did not want to go to Grant's party. He said this repeatedly, although the prospect of being at home with his family during the New Year evening was unbearable.

And meanwhile Grant Landis returned from the office to his apartment and found his wife Martha pale with annoyance because of her mother-in-law's remarks, remarks which were made unknowingly to a successful rival who had scored an overwhelming victory. Hearing Martha's version of these remarks, Grant became very angry with his mother, an anger in which the thirty-six years of his life were revived. Thinking of these remarks, Grant became more and more angry until his anger was such that he might have still been unmarried.

During the soft afternoon, a light rain began to fall. The weather was not cold and shining, as it should have been for the winter holiday. The weather was boring and gray. Nevertheless in the streets of the first capital of the world, the capital of the accessibility to experience, there was some gaiety, leftover gaiety from the Christmas holiday. Christmas trees shone with a toytown brilliance in apartment house windows, as evening slipped down. Few human beings looked at the trees, however, and fewer were aware of them, for they had been present for more than a week.

And at the same time Wilhelmina Gold argued with her parents

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as she prepared to go downtown to meet Shenandoah. The argument concerned the fact that Wilhelmina was going to meet Shenandoah downtown, instead of his obeying the manners of the middle class and coming to call for her. This kind of behavior had been the cause of many disputes between the parents and the daughter. The parents were not sure that Shenandoah was more than a mere friend of Wilhelmina. He did not behave like a suitor or prospective son-in-law. But then he did not behave like any one they had viewed in almost fifty years of life. This made them suspect every possibility. Apart, however, from any concern with marriage, they found Shenandoah's behavior inexplicable. For example, his self-consciousness was so extreme that he stumbled whenever he thought that anyone was looking at him when he crossed the room.

"Some day he will fall flat on his face," said Mrs. Gold, enjoying the idea and yet fearing this young man.

He was incapable of saying, How do you do? with the least aplomb, although on the other hand once he began to speak it was difficult to interrupt him. He never dressed well and although he seemed to them to be smart and to know many things, when he spoke, he spoke with such passion and contempt and with so many speech defects that it was difficult to imagine that he would ever be successful and well-to-do. Worst of all, from the point of view of the Golds, he was not the kind of young man who, when married to Wilhelmina, would come with her for dinner every Friday night after taking an apartment not far from the Golds.

The argument in progress between parents and daughter went back to the old and estranged past. The parents had objected grievously from the beginning because Shenandoah did not always come to call for Wilhelmina, but she met him on a street-corner or if it was cold in a cafeteria. It was useless to explain as Wilhemina had tried to explain to her parents, poor souls who had known youth at the turn of the century, that a girl was not of necessity a loose woman merely because she waited for a young man on a street-corner. Yet such is the capacity of the human heart to accustom itself to infamy, they had come to accept the fact that Shenandoah did not always come to call for her because there were times when, in an effort to ease her difficulties, he did call for her.

Mr. Gold blamed his daughter's acceptance of this peculiar young man, if acceptance it was, upon the university she had attended for four years, and where she had met Shenandoah. He forgot that before going to the university Wilhelmina had rejected with violence and contempt the *mores* and ethos of her parents. Mr. Gold felt that

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she might have altered and become sensible if she had only met the right young man.

Wilhelmina's sensibility was that of an only child who for twenty-four years has been adored, tended, and nagged by her parents. As Mrs. Gold helped her pretty daughter to dress, she made remarks which shifted between ruthless criticism and infatuated admiration. She observed once again that her daughter had the legs of a Ziegfield Follies girl and a face as refined as those she studied on the Sunday society pages. But, given such native gifts, why, at the age of twenty-four, a late age for an unmarried girl, did she have to go out only with this strange author in unpressed pants? Mrs. Gold was unable to penetrate this unpleasant fact. Her disappointment with her husband, who was not rich and hence to her mind a failure, united with her hope and her disappointment in her daughter, and all these feelings, which had their beginning in the first week of her marriage, arose to the point of compulsion. She made remarks which she knew would enrage her daughter because they had enraged her many times before.

"Why," she asked her daughter as she helped her to adjust her dress, "did you discourage Herman like that? After all, he wanted to marry you so much."

The fantastic character of this question will be understood from the fact that Herman had been married for four years now and was the father of three children, all girls. But more than that, Herman was a dentist, extremely prosperous. During his suit, he had argued long and stubbornly with Wilhelmina about her disdain for *Collier's,* which he read with passion from week to week, impatient for the appearance of each new number because of the unbearable excitement which the serial inevitably inspired in him. And he had pointed out to Wilhelmina that if she married him, she would have no dental bills, and when Wilhelmina had said, "What a vulgar argument to make to a girl," he had observed that what she regarded as vulgarity now would seem merely good sense to her when she had begun to cope with "the facts of life," a phrase which made Wilhelmina wince as if it were a dental drill.

Wilhelmina's detestation of Herman had a general and representative character to such an extent that the mention of his name was enough to annoy her. When her mother, forced by a compulsion she did not in the least understand, once more regretted Wilhelmina's rejection of Herman, Wilhelmina donned her coat quickly and left the house, declaring that once she was married she would have nothing

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whatever to do with her parents. Consequently, Wilhelmina's ride downtown in the subway was one in which she was sickened by her sense of guilt, while Mrs. Gold spent New Year's Eve in tears, tears interrupted only to renew her quintessential criticism of her husband, who quietly damned the day that he had decided to send his daughter to the university.

And at this time, Shenandoah and Nicholas travelled crosstown in a street-car, standing up in the press and brushing against human beings they would never see again. They continued their argument which on the surface concerned the question, Should Nicholas go to a party where he would for the most part be a stranger? This was a type of the academic argument, since the street-car slowly went crosstown, bearing the young men to the argument's conclusion. Yet the dispute had come to the point where each young man, oppressed, cited and bore in mind only the other's faults of character, and Shenandoah was becoming aware that the other passengers were listening in amazement to their virtually ontological discussion of character when the street-car arrived at their destination, and they dismounted. Immediately they saw Wilhelmina on the street-corner, angry at her mother, Shenandoah, and chiefly herself. But her anger vanished as he arrived and there was no longer any reason to be impatient.

Nicholas, Wilhelmina and Shenandoah entered the remodeled tenement in which Grant lived just as the drizzle of rain turned into a downpour.

"Hello," Grant cried loudly to them from the top of the stair after the antiphonal buzzes and the shoving of the door. He shouted down the stairwell at them from sheer love of the act of greeting. But this was complicated by another habit, just as frequent, that of crying down a question in a troubled or virtually mystified voice.

"Shenandoah?" he cried down the stairwell, as if some pressing problem had been uttered. And when the question was answered by Shenandoah in an unclear voice, unclear because he was always uneasy in formal matters, Grant then shouted back a greeting, a greeting in which his voice sometimes broke or grew hoarse, while his visitors ascended, unseeing, and unseen, and unable to shout back at him because they did not enjoy his temperament or his pathological excess of energy.

As soon as the visitors arrived at the head of the fourth floor, they found that Grant, Martha, and another couple, Oliver Jones and his wife, Delia, were in their coats and about to depart. Grant

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explained that Arthur had called and asked them all to come to his house because he could not come uptown to Grant's.

"Arthur thinks he has a cold," said Grant in a tone which plainly implied that this was one more manifestation of hypochondria. To Nicholas and Wilhelmina, Grant said, "I am overjoyed that you decided to come," a remark inexplicable and so much in excess of any real need of the moment, that Nicholas and Wilhelmina were left tonguetied, and Nicholas became anxious with the fear that somehow Shenandoah had communicated his doubt about coming to Grant.

As they left the house, and looked for a taxi, Grant resumed his argument with Oliver Jones, trying at the same time to signal a taxi and to enlist Shenandoah in the argument. In the background, pale, thin and nervous, stood Delia Jones, wishing that one of them would speak to her. She was sure that no one was aware of her presence. Nicholas suffered from precisely the same feelings.

"That is the only possible explanation," he said to himself, still preoccupied with Grant's greeting and Shenandoah's betrayal of him. Since no one paid any attention to him, he decided to become active, useful and prominent. He went out into the middle of the street to hail a taxi, and finally stopped one, but at the same time his feet became soaked as he stepped into a black puddle near the sewer. Consequently Nicholas lost interest in everything but his wet feet and his cold. As they seated themselves in the taxi, Delia Jones became very self-conscious about the pressure of the bodies of the other human beings, and she wished again that she had stayed at home.

When these guests arrived at the apartment house where Arthur Harris lived, Nicholas was disturbed so much by the possibility of pneumonia that immediately upon being introduced to Frances Harris he asked her if he might please have a pail of hot water in which to bathe his feet. Frances was thunderstruck by this request, but since it seemed to have been made with the utmost seriousness, she gave him a pail for hot water, making no comment, for she was one of perfect tact.

The party had not become a unique kind of being as yet. One reason for this was that not everyone had arrived. Yet it was already clear that the great psychological *place* of the party was the sense of having-nowhere-better-to-go.

In general, the guests already present suffered in one or another way from the emotions which had distorted the newcomers. Some felt

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that they were not wanted before they arrived, and when they arrived they saw that this view was incorrect, since no one seemed to care very much who was present. Thus, corrected by incontestable perception, some of them felt that they would not have been invited if this had been an important party, the kind of a party they had supposed it to be when they felt the emotion of flattery upon being invited.

Soon after their arrival, a long and important conversation began between Shenandoah and Oliver Jones.

Oliver was an interesting and unfortunate human being. Shenandoah liked him very much and was ashamed of liking him, for the only reason for liking him was personal charm. Oliver wrote fiction in which his desire to be a circulating library success was at war with his desire to be a serious author. He had a true talent for fiction, but he was unaware or unsure of this fact, and this made him dishonest in a variety of ways. This dishonesty might not have mattered very much, had he remained able to be honest with himself and honest in the activity of authorship. But his sense of guilt pressed him to the point where for relief it was necessary for him to deny to himself that anyone was honest and that honesty had any real existence. Consequently, his native gift for understanding other human beings was often annulled by his need to deny that other human beings were unlike himself; and thus he suspected everyone of everything because he suspected and convicted himself of many wrongs. He had recently shocked his already overworked conscience by writing a review of stupendous praise for a work by an extremely influential and foolish literary critic who had befriended him and who might befriend him many times again. This review went so far in false praise that the critic himself was embarassed as well as pleased. But before writing the review Oliver had read passages of the book to many of his friends to show them how foolish the book was. He had done this because he suffered, like so many other human beings, from a desperate desire to be honest some of the time. He bore in mind these occasions of deprecation and consequently apologized too often for the extreme praise he had given the book, forgetting that no one cared very much whether he was honest. And all this behavior would have been unnecessary to Oliver, had he only known that he was really a gifted author! Unsure of his gifts, Oliver was ashamed of his wife Delia, and they had what Oliver assumed to be an understanding that each was free to become involved in amorous interludes. Delia did not understand this understanding, she suffered very much because her husband had not made love to her for years, and she tried very hard

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but without success to become involved in what Oliver termed amorous interludes, concerning which he had stipulated only that she be discreet and keep them a private and personal matter.

As Shenandoah conversed with Oliver, Delia surveyed the living room, wondering against intelligent doubt if tonight might not be the beginning of an amorous interlude.

Shenandoah and Oliver were discussing Gide's *Journal* which both had lately read. Shenandoah did not know French very well and he may have been mistaken in his comments, which concerned Gide's jealousy of Proust. This jealousy did not show itself directly, but it seemed to Shenandoah to express itself in Gide's sentences about Proust's grammatical errors and his irrational resentment that Proust had chosen to conceal or invert the homosexuality of the protagonist in *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*.

". . . How foolish jealousy is, among authors," said Shenandoah, after he had spoken of Gide, "Proust, Eliot, Rilke, Mann and Valéry all produced great works and received the recognition they deserved. Literature is not like space and business. One great work does not displace another great work . . ."

This view irritated Oliver. Had he been in better health and had he drunk less, he might have concealed his irritation. He was irritated both because he thought that what Shenandoah said was untrue and also because he wished with all his heart that he were able to believe that it was true.

"Don't be naive," said Oliver, "it's obvious that authors compete for fame. Not only that, Proust wrote the work which Gide should have written and he took from Gide his hold upon the rising generations of intellectuals . . ."

"I don't mean to deny the *hallucination* of competition," said Shenandoah, intoxicated by the benevolence of his idea, "and I certainly don't deny the existence of jealous feelings. But consider how, after twenty years, both Gide and Proust are studied as great authors. They do not get in each other's way and the rising generation reads the works of both with the same attention and admiration."

Oliver said nothing for the moment. He was trying to restrain his irritation. We are probably both wrong, said Shenandoah to himself, for this had often been true. Oliver passed to the possibility that Shenandoah was denying the actuality of competition because he feared the feelings of his rivals. Next, Oliver felt that what Shenandoah had said was an attack, however unknowing, upon his own acute sense of rivalry. He had to decide that Shenandoah was right

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and he had been foolish for years, or that he was right and Shenandoah was ignorant and innocent. The latter view immediately triumphed and his irritation took hold of him and he felt compelled to wound Shenandoah.

"How old are you?" said Oliver with a beautiful hardness upon his face.

"Twenty-four years of age," said Shenandoah. He knew very well that the question was an affront, but he did not want to quarrel with Oliver.

"You are just an infant," said Oliver, determined to hurt Shenandoah's feelings, "you have just not lived long enough." Thus, with this sentence, he declared that Shenandoah did not know what he was saying and he won the argument.

"How old are you?" said Shenandoah with awkward constraint. His determination not to be angry had quickly broken down.

"You know how old I am, thirty-four," said Oliver in fury, "I've told you a dozen times."

"Well for that matter," said Shenandoah, "you know how old I am, but I was too polite to mention the fact." He knew that this remark was self-righteous an instant too late to halt himself.

"O never mind," said Oliver, for his mind had shifted to the much more serious irritation he felt because he was thirty-four years of age, a thought which became most urgent and most productive of feelings of anxiety and despair on a birthday or on New Year's Eve.

Shenandoah moved away as Oliver looked at the carpet and then at nothing at all. Oliver felt a pang of guilt as Shenandoah departed and consequently he sought to remember all that was wrong with Shenandoah.

Shenandoah expects everyone to be as interested in him as he is interested in himself, Oliver thought, as he sought self-extenuation; he has decided that competition does not exist because it makes him uncomfortable, which is one form of egotism, and because he thinks very well of himself, which is the worst form of egotism.

Shenandoah had departed ostensibly to freshen his drink, but actually to hide his despair at his inability not to get into arguments with other human beings, especially those he liked.

He was overcome by a convenient self-pity as he reached for cold ice to put in his highball glass. His self-pity was convenient because it made it unnecessary for him to engage in further thought.

All I ever wanted, he said to himself brokenly, was to have friends and to go to parties. Shenandoah had for long cherished the

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belief that if he were an interesting and gifted author, everyone would like him and want to be with him and enjoy conversation with him.

He criticized the self-pity which wept in him, he criticized it and repudiated it from the top of his mind, for all the good it did.

In other cages of the room, other human beings were trying without success to get along with each other.

Nicholas O'Neil sat on the bathtub rim, his feet in a pail of hot water, full of self-pity and self-absorption, wondering what disease would take him to an early grave.

Arthur Harris remarked to Wilhelmina Gold that much might be said of the truth of the remark that drinking was an inexpensive form of mysticism. Wilhelmina replied that it was far from inexpensive. The party bored her because she did not like to drink.

Martha Landis looked across the living room at Delia Jones and regarded her gown, which was intended to suggest to many minds the delightful possibility of taking it off. Martha knew of the domestic agreement of the Joneses, since Oliver was unable to hold his tongue about matters interesting to him, and she saw both the intimacy and the pathos of the gown. Delia, who was beginning her second drink, was still unhappy and uneasy, for no one had spoken to her very much, a silence which often occurred at parties. Because of her uneasiness, Delia tried to down her drink quickly. She began to feel miserable because she had not married the man who had courted her for two years before she encountered Oliver. She had refused him because, when they went out to dinner, he filled his pockets with granulated sugar, a habit contracted during a poverty-beslummed and unsweetened childhood. During the courtship he was earning a great deal of money and there was no reason for any hoarding of sugar: it was merely a tic which continued from childhood, and absentmindedly, yet compelled by the whole being. He had other such habits, although they were less public. Thinking about these habits, Delia felt that she had regarded them as being too important, for she forgot, after these years, how expressive and significant they were. And after all, why should anyone have to pay for another human being's childhood? One has to pay for one's own, and one is in debt as it is because of the continuous expense. The pain of these thoughts was so keen that Delia went to get another drink, and drank it down quickly in the hope of false serenity and false joy.

Delia was attractive and intelligent. She was unable to understand why no amorous interludes occurred, for certainly Oliver was not in the least at a loss, and she heard everywhere of extra-marital

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episodes of other human beings. She did not understand that it was not a question of a defect in her, but of the difficulty of direct communication in modern life, the difficulty of making clear her willingness. At times she entertained this explanation, but the passing recognition was ineffectual and melted away because more powerful by far was her fear that she was not attractive. By attributing her poverty in love to an unattractiveness which did not exist, she arrived at a picture of her plight which was coherent and which required no activity on her part, but merely sorrow. This view permitted her an uneasy acquiescence in continuous unhappiness.

And now the party had become an entity and an event like a snowfall in a metropolitan city. Everyone had had enough to drink, just enough to make them amiable. Everyone shone. The charms of each human being sparkled like theatre marquees. The conversation seemed, in the warm subjectivity of choice spirits, to be as brilliant as Mozart. In some ways, the exchanges resembled a ballroom dance. In other ways, they were like the moment when the silent and ever-wondrous snow has overcome the great city and made a new thing of it, full of innocence, freshness, and unexpected marvels of whiteness.

The stories which were told were not lacking in malice, but the malice was gentle, it was apologized for, and it was introduced only because, as everyone knows, it is very difficult to be funny without attacking some other human being for whom one has, as a whole, some admiration and affection.

Frances Harris told the story of the Polish schoolgirl who, when asked what her religion was, replied that she was an antagonist.

"We are all antagonists," said Shenandoah to himself in easy despair, looking across the room at Oliver.

Wilhelmina looked at Shenandoah, saw his unhappiness, supposed that he had had an unfortunate conversation, and, knowing Shenandoah, thought he must have said something utterly without tact.

"He always tells other human beings what he regards as the bitter truth about each one of them and then he is astonished that they get angry."

In another room, Grant Landis was making telephone calls without pause in an effort to secure signatures to a petition which protested against a suppression of civil liberties in the activity of labor leaders. His purpose was noble, but on the other hand he spoke in the same way, with the same intonations, giggles, and implications of intimacy to each of the different human beings, and this suggested

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that perhaps each of them existed for him only in a limited sense as a unique individuality.

Delia Jones was now free of the inhibitions which had tormented her so much. She had had four strong highballs. She began to look about at the men of the party whom she did not know and wonder what it would be like to have them make love to her. It is different with everyone, one of her female friends had told her. It is the same with everyone, Oliver had reported. Delia did not look at the men she already knew, deluded by the view that they had already decided against her, since she was not attractive enough.

Nicholas O'Neil remained outside of the zone of false or specious well-being. He still sat upon the bathroom rim and left only when someone else wanted to enter. This became more and more frequent as the drinking continued. Since Nicholas had had nothing to drink, he was alienated from the party in every sense. Finally he decided that it was useless to remain in the bathroom any longer, for he was discommoded so often by the tide of events. Hence he donned his wet socks and shoes again, returned to the living room, and looked with a critical eye at the happy people.

Wilhelmina regarded Shenandoah as he sat relaxed and thus free from the distortions of self-consciousness. He seemed almost attractive now, but not at other times, for he was so self-conscious that he was unable to sing with thousands when the Star-Spangled Banner was played at Madison Square Garden. Wilhelmina told the story of the labyrinthine bureaucracy of the Emergency Relief Bureau where she was employed. St. Francis himself, she explained, would be regarded as difficult by the Bureau, if he were on relief, because he gave food away to the birds.

Hearing Wilhelmina and suffering from echolalia and a banal association of ideas, Nicholas exclaimed:

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!" for the idea of St. Francis as unable to get relief in the Irish Catholic city of New York struck him as being as inconceivable as the Immaculate Conception.

Oliver Jones, disturbed more and more because he had hurt Shenandoah's feelings, tried to renew conversation with him. But Shenandoah was lost in the thought of how happy he might be, were he but able to believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

"God in a girl's womb! it is not conceivable," he said sadly and half-aloud.

Oliver, being unable to gain Shenandoah's attention, looked to see what Delia was doing. She was sitting next to Horatio Lapin,

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a limited person who came to parties only to drink. But Delia was not acquainted with this fact. At other and less decorous parties Horatio Lapin had often been accosted by young women of some beauty. He had looked at the young lady, scrutinized his drink, and then invariably decided to have another drink. It was less trouble.

Oliver knew that Delia might soon begin to behave amorously and conspicuously. He decided to do nothing, however.

"Let her have a good time," he said to himself warmly.

His eyes fell on the bookshelves and he saw a copy of *Axel's Castle* by Edmund Wilson. He drew down the book, brushed through the pages, and his eye and heart were caught by the following passage, which he arose and recited as if it were blank verse:

> It is at the death of Bergotte that Proust's narrator, in what is perhaps the noblest passage of the book, affirms the reality of those obligations, culminating in the obligation of the writer to do his work as it ought to be done, which seem to derive from 'some other world,' 'based on goodness, scrupulousness, sacrifice,' so little sanction can we recognize them as having in the uncertain and selfish world of humanity — those 'laws which we have obeyed because we have carried their precepts within us without knowing who inscribed them there — those laws to which we are brought by every profound exercise of the intelligence, and which are invisible — and are they really? — to fools'."

Oliver dropped his exalted tone of voice. He was in all truth devoted very much to the sentiments he had quoted, but he did not think that many others felt like that. Hence, after some hesitation, he made a remark which was intended to diminish or discount his allegiance to Proust's words:

"These noble sentiments," he said in a tone of unpleasant cleverness, "would be more becoming, if Proust had not been homosexual, dishonest, insincere, a snob, a literary politician, and a pet Jew".

Although some had been oppressed by the rapture with which Oliver recited the passage, all were offended by his facile cynicism and attack on Proust.

"He is the last one to cast the first stone," said Arthur to himself, "especially after writing that review."

"His overworked conscience," said Shenandoah to himself, "has just enjoyed some relief by spitting itself in the face."

In the other room, Grant Landis continue to devote himself to the making of phone calls which might help the lot of the jailed labor leaders.

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In general, Oliver's cynicism was the end of the period of good feeling, which might have ended anyway because of the progress of the drinking.

Then the telephone pierced everyone's ears. Grant had ceased his calls for a moment in order to look up a number in the directory. As Arthur went to answer the phone, everyone forgot about Oliver's remark, though the sourness of the emotion remained like dregs.

Leon Berg was on the telephone. He was detested or disliked by everyone at the party because his chief activity was to explain to all authors that they were without talent. From what Arthur was saying in reply, it was clear that Leon wanted to come to the party, and had sufficiently downed his resentment at not being asked to the party to humiliate himself by asking if he might come.

At the party a discussion of Leon's character began, and in this discussion, the truth was used as a form of falsehood, since bias, like a squint, selected only his unpleasant and evil traits.

Meanwhile Leon left the room in which he lived and stopped to exchange a word with Claude Kagan, a minor poet who admired and feared him, impressed by the fact that he wrote nothing at all and condemned everyone, including Shakespeare. Leon told Claude where he was going and when Claude asked without much hope if he might come too, Leon replied that such an addition would be quite impossible. He then remarked quickly that all modern poets were worthless because they did not have the effect upon History of John L. Lewis and Bing Crosby, and concluded by saying that there would be no new world war because so many human beings expected a war and so many human beings had never been right about anything.

At the party the conversation continued to be a discussion of Leon, and Oliver revived the rumor that Leon's second name had been Bergson, shortened by him because he was unable to endure the rivalry between his own ambition and Bergson's fame. In fairness to Leon, some of his best stories were quoted, in particular the one about the man who visited the World's Fair and said that the one thing lacking, the one important thing, was a screamatorium, a place where everyone who wished might go to scream because of the quality of life in this period.

Leon was walking crosstown and losing his feeling of pleasure that he was going to the party. He stopped to have a drink, but this did not help him very much. Resentment mounted in him and he wondered if they were laughing at him because he had asked to come to the party. He decided that this was an untrue view inspired by his sense of persecution, but he was none too sure.

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As these thoughts went though Leon like swords, Delia Jones at the party was going from one man to another, making amorous proposals which were regarded for the most part as efforts at wit.

"Who are you?" Delia cooed at the strange men, staring deeply into their eyes. Shenandoah, regarding this action from a distance, saw that Nicholas would be the next candidate, and then, fearing perhaps wrongly, that Nicholas might welcome the overture far too well, moved forward to prevent his friend. He tugged his sleeve and said as softly as possible:

"Don't be foolish, she's very drunk."

Since there was no immediate justification for the fear that Nicholas might welcome Delia, Nicholas turned on Shenandoah in silent fury.

Shenandoah's move was observed by Oliver and he was upset by it. He decided that something must be done. But he was afraid that an open scandal might occur.

"Who are you?" said Delia to Leon as the door opened on his face.

For a split second, Leon thought that he had rung the wrong bell. Then he saw Arthur, who had just opened the door and was standing at an angle to it. Leon was grossly taken aback. He had not counted on much of a reception, but he was so uncertain as to being welcome that this seemed to be a direct attack.

But all the wit and fury in him rose in inspiration.

"Who are *you?*" he cried back at Delia.

Her face fell. All looked, for Leon had spoken loudly. Two laughed. No one knew if Delia's consternation was the consequence of Leon's triumphant and leering face, or the result of her actually being unable to think of who she was.

Oliver saw the relaxation and defeat in her. He decided that this was the best moment to correct her or to send her home without an outbreak of recrimination. He drew her into one of the bedrooms and asked her to behave herself. Unfortunately he was unable to keep the irony in his mind from entering his voice, though he had tried to be gentle and reasonable in tone.

"Everyone feels as you do," he said foolishly, "there is no need for this self-indulgence."

Her hysteria became positive again.

"I am not self-indulgent, you are!" said Delia in overflowing hatred.

"All right, you are not, *I* am," said Oliver, "but please try in

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any case to behave yourself."

"Why?" screamed Delia in fury, "Why? Why should I behave myself? *What does it ever get me? Everyone is against me, anyway. No one cares for me and no one ever will.*"

Oliver agreed with her, but was unable to endure the shame of her screaming, audible all over.

"Why?" she continued to scream without adding any explanation.

"Behave yourself because I brought you here," said Oliver curtly.

"Why?" she screamed more loudly than ever.

"This is what I get for bringing you here, out of a misplaced sense of pity," said Oliver.

She slapped him in the face and said that she was going to kill herself. He held her arms and she struggled against him. Arthur entered.

"Come now," he said in a friendly way which Delia misunderstood, "everything will be all right."

"Who asked you to come in here?" she said screaming again.

"After all, I live here," said Arthur, astounded by her attack. Delia broke loose from Oliver's hold and slapped Arthur, who now regretted profoundly his entrance, as well as what he had just said.

And then Frances came into the room with a cold compress for Delia. Frances had been kind to Delia, and Delia felt that at last she had an ally.

"Go away," said Frances to Oliver, and Arthur.

"You are my friend," said Delia to Frances, weeping and once more limp. And thus, after a time, Frances succeeded in quieting Delia, who became very ashamed, although Frances sought to assure her that no one regarded her behavior as anything but an attack of illness.

Meanwhile the unseen scene was discussed in the living room. And then Wilhelmina noticed that they had not marked the moment of the New Year, when the party horns are blown, whistles peal, everyone kisses, and sings "Auld Lang Syne." The radio was playing that they might know the exact moment of passage and unbearable beauty. But Delia's screaming had made them unaware of everything else.

They all went to the window to make sure that it was already the New Year; and they saw that the rain had turned into snow, the most beautiful of all the illusions of the natural world. Yes, it was 1938. How strange that it should be 1938, how strange seemed the word and the fact.

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No one knew that this was to be the infamous year of the Munich Pact, but everyone knew that soon there would be a new world war because only a few unimportant or powerless people believed in God or in the necessity of a just society sufficiently to be willing to give anything dear for it.

As Shenandoah, Nicholas, and Wilhelmina parted in emptiness and depression, Shenandoah was already locked in what was soon to be a post-Munich sensibility: complete hopelessness of perception and feeling.

"Some other world," he said to himself, "some world of goodness; some other life; some life where the nobility we admire is lived; some life in which those who had dedicated their being to the examination of consciousness live by the laws they face at every turn."

"What are you babbling about?" said Wilhelmina.

"I am sorry for the whole world, said Sadie Thompson," was Shenandoah's reply. But he knew well enough that he was chiefly sorry for himself. But he shrewdly decided not to admit this to Nicholas and Wilhelmina.

"I wish I had not come," said Wilhelmina, "I will never have any children."

"I won't marry you, unless we are going to have children," said Shenandoah.

"I don't want to marry you," said Wilhelmina.

"I wish everyone would drop dead," said Nicholas as they descended into the subway.

"*Why*?" asked Shenandoah.

"Who are *you*?" replied Nicholas, deciding to have nothing further to do with Shenandoah and going home by himself.

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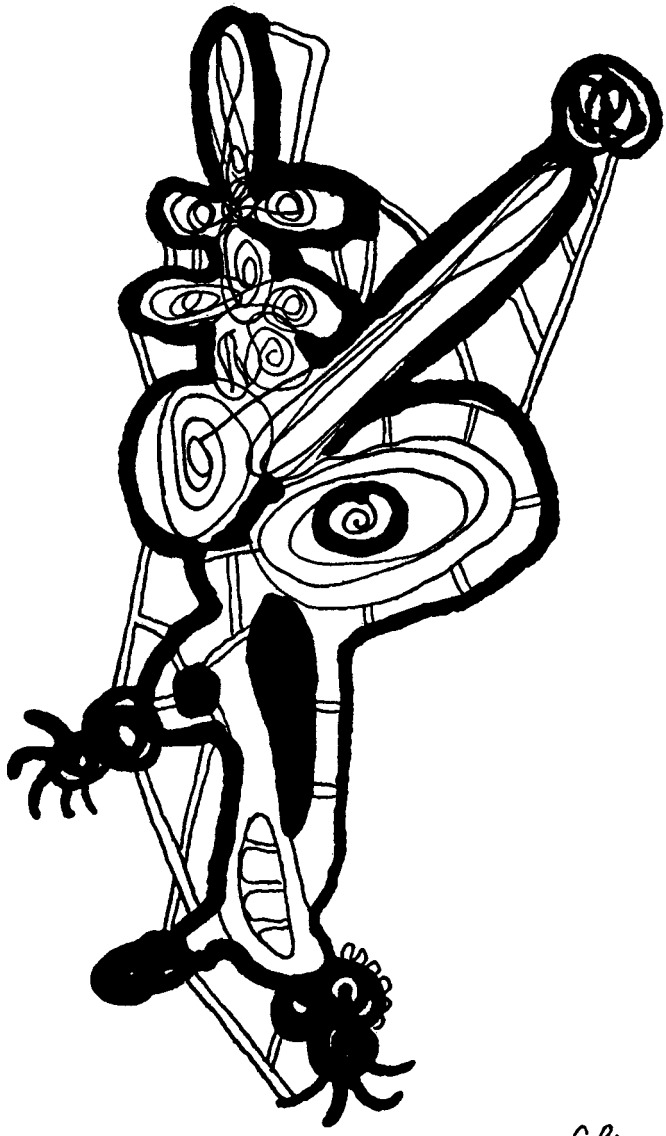

Courtesy 67 Gallery, New York

CHARLES SELIGER: Drawing. Ink. 1945.

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Poems

IN EUROPE

(to Elie)

recitative for a radio play
Three Voices to the accompaniment of a drum and bells, and the faint grunt and thud of a dancing-bear.

Man
The frontiers at last. I am feeling so tired.
We are getting the refugee habit,

Woman
Moving from island to island,
Where the boundaries are clouds,
Where the frontiers of the land are water.

Old Man
We are getting the refugee habit.

Woman
We are only anonymous feet moving,
Without friends any more, without books,
Or companionship any more. We are getting

Man
The refugee habit. There's no end
To the forest and no end to the moors:
Between the just and the unjust
There is little distinction,

Old Man
Bodies like houses, without windows and doors:

Woman
The children have become so brown,
Their skins have become dark with sunlight.

Man
They have learned to eat standing.

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Old Man

When we come upon men crucified,
Or women hanging downward from the trees
They no longer understand.

Woman

How merciful is memory with its fantasies.
They are getting the refugee habit. . . .

Old Man

How weary are the roads of the blood.
Walking forwards towards death in my mind
I am walking backwards again into my youth;
A mother, a father, and a house,
One street, a certain town, a particular place:
And the feeling of belonging somewhere,
Of being appropriate to certain fields and trees.

Woman

Now our address is the world. Walls
Constrain us. O do you remember
The peninsula where we so nearly died,
And the way the trees looked owned,
Human and domestic like a group of horses?
They said it was Greece.

Man

Through Prussia into Russia,
Through Holland into Poland,
Through Rumania into Albania.

Woman

Following the rotation of the seasons.

Old Man

We are getting the refugee habit:
The past and the future are not enough,
Are two walls only between which to die:
Who can live in a house with two walls?

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Man
The present is an eternal journey;
In one country winter, in another spring.

Old Man
I am sick of the general deaths:
We have seen them impersonally dying:
Everything I had hoped for, fireside and hearth,
And death by compromise some summer evening.

Man
You are getting the refugee habit:
You are carrying the past in you
Like a precious vessel, remembering
Its essence, ownership and ordinary loving.

Woman
We are too young to remember.

Old Man
Nothing disturbed such life as I remember
But telephone or telegram,
Such death-bringers to the man among the roses
In the garden of his house, smoking a pipe.

Woman
We are the dispossessed, sharing
With gulls and flowers our lives of accident;
No time for love, no room for love:
If only the children

Man
Were less wild and unkept, belonged
To the human family, not speechless,

Old Man
And shy as the squirrels in the trees:

Woman
If only the children

Old Man
Recognised their father, smiled once more.

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Old Man and Woman

They have got the refugee habit,
Walking about in the rain hoping for food,
Looking at their faces in the bottom of wells:

Old Man

They are living the popular life.
All Europe is moving out of winter
Into Spring with all boundaries being
Broken down, dissolving, vanishing.
Migrations are beginning, a new habit
From where the icebergs rise in the sky
To valleys where corn is spread like butter. . . .

Woman

So many men and women: each one a soul.

Man

So many souls crossing the world,

Old Man

So many bridges to the end of the world.
Frontiers mean nothing any more. . . .

Woman

Peoples and possessions,
Lands, rights,
Titles, holdings,
Trusts, Bonds

Old Man

Mean nothing any more, nothing.
A whistle, a box, a shawl, a cup,
A broken sword wrapped in newspaper.

Woman

All we have left us, out of context,

Old Man

A jar, a moustrap, a broken umbrella,
A coin, a pipe, a pressed flower

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Woman
To make an alphabet for our children.

Old Man
A chain, a whip, a lock,
A drum and a dancing bear. . . .

Woman
We have got the refugee habit.
Beyond tears at last, into some sort of safety
From fear of wanting, fear of hoping,
Fear of everything but dying.
We can die now.

Old Man
Frontiers mean nothing any more. Dear Greece!

Man
Yes. We can die now.

LAWRENCE DURRELL

PASSAGE FROM "ESSAY ON RIME"

The Failure in Belief

I made a statement on the previous page
That we have paid for poetry with our blood,
A tabloid fact which sounds unfortunately
Misplaced in an essay. But I refer
To one who is the martyr of this age
Of rime, a man whose suicide confounds
The biographer and the critic. I mean Hart Crane,
The poet of our industrial success,
Whose death was equally an act of shame,
Bewilderment and contrition. How else explain
The self-murder of this talent that stands higher
Than any, excepting our expatriates,
Since Whitman? Where in all his verses lies
Concealed the clue to his destruction? What
In this short life suggests the violent death?
One says his mystic nature, the hand of fire,
Another his maladjustment, and a third

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Dissatisfaction with the century.
These are not answers. Add to any one
Of the above a psychopathic complement
And one might have the formula; but Crane
Supplies us with no clinical evidence
To make the diagnosis neat. Of all
The famous suicides of modern art
From Nietzsche on, this baffles more than any,
Is the most terrible of all because
Committed in cold blood, apart from love,
Apart from hate, apart from sure belief.

Let us not reckon the statistics of
Those artists who have left the pencilled note,
The unpaid debt to life, and with less grief
Than expectation fell; but only ask
What deadly distillate of the heart is this
That kills the man most dearly pledged to live?
And, think, is not this dream the same that draws
The artist into self-imposed exile,
And some to self-imagined hell, and some
To infamous hatred of the thing they write?

Crane died for modern rime, a wasted death;
I make the accusation with the right
Of one who loved his book; died without cause,
Leaped from the deck-rail of his disbelief
To senseless strangulation. When we shall damn
The artist who interprets all sensation,
All activity, all experience, all

Belief through art, then this chief suicide
May be redeemed. How many blind survivors,
Though ignorant of the logic of Crane's end,
Continue in his steps. Or can it be
That we need deep-sea divers to bring back
His book, his body, and his memory?

KARL SHAPIRO

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Modern Writers in the World of Necessity

STEPHEN SPENDER

THE FASCISTS in their downfall have left us a sinister inheritance, a world which they have lost but on which they have been able to set their curse. The curse is the spell which they invoked in order to achieve their triumphs. It is the curse of a necessity which hangs over everyone and everything, justifying conscription, economies, censorship, discipline, because there is a continual crisis in the world which can only be solved by the most ruthless use of governmental power. When the fascists expired in flames of self-destruction, they were like that old peasant who, on his deathbed, told his children that there was a treasure of gold buried at the bottom of the field. He knew that they would have to dig for the rest of their lives. And the fascists know that we must build and control everything and almost everyone after they have gone. They may think that after their deaths the curse which they laid on their own countries in their lives will be laid on the whole world.

The difference, of course, between fascism and this heritage from it is that with fascism the conditions for the conscription of every branch of life into the totalitarian effort were largely forced; with us, ruin, shortages, the disasters left by fascism. have made the total organization of society really necessary. The difference is between necessity as an excuse, and necessity as a reality. If the fascist governments had been superseded by other forms of government, before 1939, then these other governments could have ruled without introducing measures of control and conscription. Any government now, whatever its party, if it is to govern, must control and ration and organize at home, while approving of equally strong measures in its foreign policy abroad, to bring world order out of the chaos left by fascism.

The problem of our time has always been power. The evils of power are fully proved to us, and our age is a classic demonstration of Lord Acton's famous saying that all power corrupts and that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Yet it is impossible for us to renounce

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power, because none of the problems of the modern world can be solved without exercising it. We must learn to use it justly and wisely. This means that governments must be able to exercise the controls necessary to the postwar world without giving way to the temptation to set themselves up in a position in which they are irreplaceable. It means that what is considered necessary must include culture and criticism, and not just that which is immediately desirable. It means that the democratic governments must reject the evil inheritance which fascism has maliciously left them—to become overruling, imperialist and totalitarian. It also means that the people in the democracies must deliberately avoid slipping into the mood of acquiescence which was typical of the peoples living under fascism. They must accept the sacrifices which are necessary, but they should not do so merely because the government has mentioned the magic word "necessity." They should insist that strong government does not mean no possible alternative to the existing party or coalition in power.

Freedom has been defined as the recognition and acceptance of necessity. This means that in a situation where men are compelled by a sense of common social necessity, they recognize freely the reasons for their actions and they accept them. It does not mean that necessity can be used by the government as an excuse for every kind of censorship and infringement of liberty. In fact, what determines freedom is the spirit of criticism and vigilance, so that the controls which seem to be imposed by the government are willingly imposed on themselves by free individuals for reasons which they understand.

But what is necessary for society in a state of emergency hardly ever coincides with the wishes of the individual, precisely because the margin which distinguishes an individual personality from a mere economic and social unit almost disappears in a society undergoing continual crisis. Today people notice the gap between the massive, generalized, levelling, ruthless, mechanical public activities which are directed in the interests of all, and yet which coincide exactly with no one's wishes for himself, and the eccentric, yet creative needs of individual self-expression. Government becomes more and more concerned with imperative necessity, an either/or meaning that unless individuals act as is required of them, consciously suppressing their desire to express themselves extravagantly, they will be romantic rebels against the measures necessary to feed and clothe the victims of the war, and to prevent further wars.

The idea of necessity tends to swallow up every cause that cannot be integrated within the problem of distributing available goods and

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satisfying minimal needs. Flamboyant and rhetorical tastes, which produced the most beautiful architecture of the past, appear antisocial in a time when governments are conscious of the limited uses to which they can put their limited stocks of building labor and materials. The dynamic need for self-expression which made the nineteenth century flourish despite all the flaws of its judgment, is dwarfed by the enormously exposed public wounds of whole nations in our time which must be healed before anything else is attended to. Thus personalities and causes are made insignificant by the perception of necessity. Overnight the struggle between the propertied and the poor classes in several countries of Europe disappeared when it became evident that everyone in those countries was almost equally dependent on aid coming from America. Ironically, the triumph of Russian communism has occurred just at the moment when communist revolutions are less than ever in a position to solve the problems of countries, and thus communists themselves have abandoned the idea of the proletarian revolution for that of a struggle of power between powerful, realistic interests, some of them formerly conservative, some of them formerly revolutionary.

In this world of necessity, there is danger of the individual who clings to personal values becoming as cynical and apathetic as many individuals under fascism. The definition of scruples, free choice, opinion, differentiation, is tending to disappear from the picture of the postwar world. Whether for or against the interests of the future of humanity, arrangements are being made and will continue to be made which will inflict injustice and misery on whole populations and involve a painful sacrifice of principles in the minds of every fair-minded spectator. Recent events in Poland, and also in Greece, are examples of a situation which is likely to repeat itself many times after the war, in which fair-minded people will have to say, with the emphasis of a new kind of patience:

Be still, be still, my soul; it is but for a season:
Let us endure an hour and see injustice done.

All these terrible injustices will have to be measured against the necessary changes in Europe. Moreover, physically, the new world we build cannot be a beautiful one. Prefabricated or temporary or steel houses on emergency sites, standardization, the most rigid economies in materials—there is no functionalist who would dare suggest that cities rebuilt under these conditions will look beautiful. All that can be said is that it is necessary to provide houses for as many people

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as possible, with limited materials and quickly, just as it is necessary to compromise with Russia over Poland, perhaps reluctantly to abandon the cause of the Central European Social Democrats, or of the Yugoslav monarchy. Necessity is no respector of persons or of parties. The only demand one can make of it is that it should really be necessary.

In the postwar world dominated by the god of necessity, it seems likely that many people will turn away from politics and seek to construct small worlds out of their private relationships, based on personal values. In doing this, these people will be imitating art: for this has been exactly the tendency of various literary movements during the past hundred years.

The significance of the attitudes of the various literary movements toward politics lies in their not having been directly political or allied to any political party: or if they had political alliances, these were for some other reason than a purely political one. The poet considered himself to be sensitively in communication with the most significant realities of life, which might be summed up under some such idea as the experience of beauty, and if he happened, like William Morris, to be a socialist, it was for the sake of beauty rather than for the sake of socialism. The politics of the artist are the politics of the unpolitical, decided on for the sake of life and not of politics. Therefore even the non-political and anti-political attitude of artists is a criticism of politics by life, though it may also imply a criticism of the artists themselves if they have an incomplete or a false attitude toward life. Thus, if one realizes that the attitude of artists who are critical of all politics is ultimately a political attitude, since politics are and must be concerned with the same kind of life as forms the subject matter of art, then it will be seen that, as so often happens, the artistic attitude foreshadows one which later may become widespread.

The attitude of the esthetes of the end of the last century toward political organization is epitomized in Whistler's famous apothegm to his fellow students whom he saw exercising with dumbbells: "Can't you get the concierge to do that sort of thing for you?" Politics, like gymnastics, were the business of the public servants while the esthetes got on with their art for art's sake, which might also be called life for life's sake. The attitude that politics exist in order that one may forget about them is, in fact, a political attitude, based on the truth that art and life are separate from and more important than the machinery of living. Unfortunately, though, in the highly organized, rationalized modern age, this idea is only a half truth. The other

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truth which is complementary to it, is that in the immense world organization of modern wealth, everyone has an obvious dependence on his position in the economic system, everyone is to some extent conditioned by his environment, and one of the most obvious characteristics of modern thought is that we cannot dissociate the individual completely from his environment. A modern St. Francis who stripped himself of all his possessions and lived a life of saintly poverty might be respected today, but could not be regarded as likely to influence the conditions of life because we have too clear a picture of the interconnectedness of the modern system to believe that anyone can help humanity by separating himself completely from it within some attitude of personal saintliness. The artist who proclaims himself isolated within the values of his art is in much the same position as the modern St. Francis would be. "Art for art's sake" may be treated with respect, but the connection of the esthetes with a political and economic situation is felt by everyone except themselves. Therefore the attempt today to be a pure artist, having renounced all political connections with society, although it has been made and will be made again and again, is simply a failure to be conscious of the artist's position in the modern world. Ruskin and William Morris were right to draw the conclusion that if the artist does not accept the social system in which he lives, he cannot wash his hands of it; unless he is for it, he must be against it.

The esthetes foreshadowed the attitude of many wealthy people in fascist countries towards fascism. Disdaining the social system in which they lived, they sought to cultivate a world of their own values, isolated from it, while accepting the position which the system gave them. Ultimately they supported fascism, because it supported them. It is interesting to note that the survivors of the esthetic movement, D'Annunzio, the futurist Marinetti, the imagist Ezra Pound, and W. B. Yeats, all showed a certain enthusiasm for fascism, because they saw in it a violent assertion of the aristocratic principle, which although decaying, kept them in their position of detachment from society. While I am writing this, a bitter controversy is raging among Italian writers. The school of "hermetic" poets claims that the mysterious obscurity of their poems written between 1923 and 1942 proves that they would never compromise with fascism. An embittered group of anti-fascists points out, however, that it is exactly this "pure" style of literature which fascism could afford to support, and whose exponents, in fact, supported fascism.

Here, though, I am not concerned with recriminations which are only of local importance, in so far as certain unfortunates (Ezra

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Pound, for example) gave political support to fascism. What is important for art is that almost every view of life today has social implications. The various schools and movements of the last few years have attempted to develop an artistic aim, a psychological truth or a view of personal relationships split off from the modern social problem. Yet, as with the esthetes of the '90's, social implications are involved even in the most personal or private world,and thus we find a writer like D. H. Lawrence, who concentrated on developing a very one-sided view of relations between men and women and the inner depths of sexuality, sympathizing with the atavism of the Nazis. The fact is that D. H. Lawrence, like Yeats and Pound, was too big a man to exclude from his mind the social problem, and the attempt to avoid it in his work put him in sympathy with the repressive lords of blood and soil. The development of the complete view of life which was potentially within him would have made him sympathetic more with his own people—the miners of Nottingham—but this would have meant a broadening of his vision and a denial of his intuitive personality altogether too painful and difficult for him. As with Lawrence, so with the Imagists, the Symbolists, the Surrealists, the Apocalyptics, the Personalists: there is an attempt to embrace any reality, however narrow, remote, violent, neurotic, visionary, private or mad, so long as it can be appealed to as part of an inner world of individuality more important and durable than the external world which seems outside the control of the individual. Yet there are elements of false prophecy and desperate remedy about all these efforts to get away from an overwhelming present history:

Newman, Ciddy, Plato, Fronny, Pascal, Bowdler, Baudelaire,
Doctor Frommer, Mrs. Allom, Freud, the Baron and Flaubert,
Lured with their compelling logic, charmed with beauty of their verse,
With their loaded sideboards whispered, "Better join us, life is worse."

Yet the outside life has a way of overtaking and overthrowing the most elaborate positions of the "art for art's sake" which is "life for life's sake." The elaborate self-disguises of the esthetes become too expensive to be kept up, the madness of the surrealists is excelled by the behavior of a world at war, personal relationships are torn aside, the journeyings of a D.H. or a T.E. Lawrence become impracticable. The innner world of personality is certainly the most important reality we know, but unless it can be related to the outer world, all attempts to develop it only reveal its isolation and weakness. This inner world is the world of civilization, but civilization is a reality in

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society, it is not just personal relationships, jokes between friends, surrealist extravaganzas, sex nightmares and mysteries. Whoever cares for it must fight to achieve it not only in his life but also in society.

Doubtless it was partly considerations of this kind which persuaded writers as detached from political passions as E. M. Forster, Maritain, Gide, Benda, Bergamin and Thomas Mann, to play a political role in the 1930's. They realized that the inner life of civilization which they maintained in their art, was in process of being destroyed in the external world of political action. Accordingly, they intervened, and although recently in England there has been a cooling off of relations between writers and leftist politicians, that does not affect the ultimate repercussions which their intervention will have. The 1930's were a turning point because they marked the realization of many artists that they had a responsibility toward civilization in the world outside themselves and their friends. The doubts that have arisen since are not as to this responsibility, but as to the part that the writer should play: whether he should lend himself to party propaganda, whether he should give up time for writing to appear on political platforms, whether he should, as T. S. Eliot suggests, define for himself very exactly the part which the man of letters may take in supporting cultural activities and limit himself to that.

The political activities of writers in the 1930's led to misunderstanding for a clear reason. The writers, for the most part, supported leftist causes, such as that of the Republicans in Spain, because they believed that, on the whole, the Republicans and the socialists were the defenders of civilization. In addition to this, in supporting the Republicans they were supporting the great cause of social justice which many intellectuals have supported in Europe ever since the time of Voltaire. But although they were indeed supporting a movement which was fighting for the cause of intellectual freedom, this movement itself had very little use for poetry and for art, except perhaps in Spain itself among Spaniards. When supported by some of the most brilliant young writers of the decade, the English Communist leaders had no idea of putting them to a better use than the crude one of getting them killed as quickly as possible on the battlefields of Spain, and of then using their names as propaganda. In this the Communists were not malicious, they simply revealed their complete ignorance of the very highest values of the freedom of the spirit for which they were supposed to be fighting, and their pathetic faith in the idea that the only use of any talent outside that of party politics is the value to which it can be turned as political propaganda.

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The writers who were not killed physically were at any rate killed as creative writers, because there was no way in which they could fit their talents into the movement, the line, the party program. This has been the experience of the writers who have sympathized with proletarian revolution all over the world, in England, in Russia, in China, and in America. It is possible that socialism has defeated its own ends, because, in attaching enormous importance to the attainment of economic liberty of the workers it has lacked respect for the highest freedom of all—the freedom to explore the truth of the philosopher and the artist without any predetermined conclusions. The insistence on philosophic materialism, the myth of the superiority of the proletariat, the obsession with the idea that every other cause must subserve the revolution, create a mental prison of socialist ideas, precisely because the revolution does not point to the release of any ideas greater than materialism, the revolution and the proletariat. Socialism is afraid of ideas, of a conception of humanity which includes the rich as well as the poor, of the unfettered imagination. One has only to think of past causes, such as the French Revolution, Nineteenth Century Liberalism, even, for that matter, the Spanish Republic, to remember that they have inspired men because they have stood for things greater than themselves, greater than politics and politicians: liberty, beauty, genius and ideals.

In the partly managerial, partly socialistic society, dominated by necessity, of the immediate future, the intelligentsia will be in a position in which, whether they like it or not, their work will have an unprecedented influence, because it will be almost the only outlet of free self-expression in a world where most commodities and employment are rigidly controlled. There are two directions in which their thought may develop, and I suggest that this is one of the turning points in history in which the ideas of the intelligentsia may really alter the lives of future generations.

One direction, which would be consistent with the tendencies of the literary movements of the past two generations, is already adumbrated in the vague movement called "personalism." The theme of this and similar tendencies is that society has nothing to offer which can satisfy any individual: the scale of power politics, planning, controls, etc., is quite unrelated to the human scale of separate individuals: the only reality to which we can cling is that of personal values. Views such as this, which are to be found in English literary magazines, could probably only flourish today in England and in America, where a good many people have learned nothing from the war except to hate control and conscription.

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The other tendency in European literature comes from the continent, especially from France and the countries occupied by the Nazis. This springs from the literature written during the Occupation. It is a literature of resistance, of hope, of faith, active and full of energy, which is yet not imprisoned within the limited and material aims of any political party. It is a poetry of writers such as Eluard, Aragon, Jouve, Emmanuel, Seghers, and others who have integrated their personal vision with an understanding of the absolutely essential tasks confronting the poet as the most fully conscious member of society. In these writers the gulf which separated the private, personal, antisocial aspect of the poet and the political aspect seems to have been bridged. The tendency is toward integration of the idea of the separate personality with that of the social being. As a result of this integration, these writers are not the intellectual by-products of politics. In other words, they aim at the expression of personality and the freedom of the imagination, while they also recognize their responsibility toward society. They create an ideal above politics, which political movements should seek to interpret in action.

An acute observer who has recently returned from France, pointed out to me: "The French writers are still faithful to the principles of the Spanish Republic." It is interesting that their close contact with the Nazis should have had this result. In the postwar society obsessed and overwhelmed with material problems, it may well be that only thinkers and creative writers can keep steadily before the world the idea that, besides the organization and distribution of material resources, it is necessary to remember that we are human, with all the limitations and all the grandeur, the full social responsibility and the necessity of freedom, which this implies.

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Paris Letter

DEAR PR:

You wanted a Paris Letter? You've picked the right man for it! Of all Expert Literary Observers (you would have had, in any case, to pass me off as such) I am for the moment the most immobile. I lie on my back in the nth Military Hospital, at Neuilly, and observe the breasts of my wardmates rising and falling jerkily in the uneasy pattern of feverish sleep.

I flew from Algiers to Paris on April 10, the only Expert Literary Observer not *returning* to this city of light but simply going there, for the first time in a long life replete with adventures. This month's *Fontaine* (the first Paris edition) has a note by Adrienne Monnier saluting the Americans-in-Paris, a very special breed. These are not the untold thousands who have installed their "Rainbow Corner" in comfortable proximity to the Madeleine. They are rather the people who love what is most Parisian in Paris, who live along the Seine, on the Ile Saint-Louis or in the Palais-Royal; who read all the highfalutin reviews and frequent all the best painters (although the latter have followed Picasso back to Montmartre, it seems). "Et d'abord Sylvia Beach, mon amie fraternelle" (sic) says Miss Monnier, and goes on with Sarah Watson and Katherine Dudley and the angelical Mabel Gardner and Dru Tartiere and Camilla Steenbrugge, all of whom stuck it out through the German occupation. I copy all these names in order to make a point, unblushingly: with the exception of the mistress of Shakespeare and Co., I've never heard of any of them. Of course there follows a list of very familiar names: MacLeish, William Carlos Williams, Waldo Frank, the dead: Sherwood Anderson and Scott Fitzgerald, the unmentionable: Ezra Pound, etc., etc. And Miss Monnier ends with the story of Hemingway's arrival in August, bearded and warlike and preoccupied—after the first joyous embraces—with an arresting idea: had she, Adrienne, not been induced to collaborate, just a wee bit? In which case he offered to shield her from any possible danger. "I seriously examined my conscience; my faith, no, I hadn't collaborated. He took Sylvia (Beach) aside and repeated the question. 'Sylvia, are you sure Adrienne hasn't collaborated and doesn't need a helping hand?' 'Why no,' answered Sylvia, 'if she's collaborated, it's been with us Americans.' Hemingway seemed to show some regret at not being able to employ his succoring chivalry—a slight regret flickering over the waves of his good, tranquillized face."

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I have no intention of ironizing at the expense of all these good people whom I do not know. I'm simply warning you of my pitiless innocence; if I ever get out of here alive, for example, I shall go to see the Place des Vosges and there, instead of saying "Well, well, there is the Place des Vosges, just where I left it," I shall probably be induced to tell you what it looks like. And if you ever feel nostalgic for the other kind of Paris Letter, just let me know and I'll quote you something like this, by Gertrude Stein (from the same issue of *Fontaine*): after describing how she went to her apartment and found everything still there, Gertrude exclaims:

"Mais quand même, quand même, quand même, c'est un miracle, oui c'est un miracle, Paris est toujours là!"

So, if you will bear all this in mind and remember besides that for more than two years now I've had neither time nor stomach for Literary Observing, you will forgive me for divagating a moment or so on the physical beauty of this city. I'm no lover of what is called "scenery," feeling in its presence chiefly an impatient desire for its human transmutation (into landscape, architecture, dream). I think this is true of most city-dwellers today, with the exception of that mass which, unable or afraid to interpret their own sensibility, must fall back on the inherited romantic habits—for which language and fables already comfortably exist. Now it so happens that just before I flew to Paris I had had occasion to travel through a good part of southern Algeria by automobile: through the gorges of Palestro to the Constantine plain (the Mitidja) down across the badlands to the northernmost oases of the Sahara; and thence, skirting the bleached or brilliant but always terrible Aures, to the coast again, and westward through the Djurdjura mountains, home of the Kabyles. Home? What is appalling, precisely, is that man has no home here. Nowhere. The mountains in the south, stripped for centuries of the alluvia which covers the plains, are now quite naked, like skeletons uncovered by a cloudburst. The soil of the plains, so rich that a date-palm would spring from a teardrop, yields almost nothing. The natives gather in a few oases and water the lands of their feudal lords. The oases are green, fresh, scented, unreal in an inhuman vastness. To the north, the Kabyles, who are of a pre-islamic Berber stock, live perched upon the peaks of the Djurdjura, each village fitted snugly like a bonnet over the barren rock. There's place for man in the valley, or along the rich coastal plain, or in the wheatfields of the Mitidja, which the Romans called Numidia. But these lands have always belonged to the conqueror, to the Roman, the Vandal, the Arab, the Turk, the French. Too much place. One hundred thousand Kabyles live frigidly in the single commune of Michelet, where one would scarcely assign more than two goats to a mountain. Yet in the lands of the conquerors man is more lonely and lost than in our Middle West.

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I make a great point of this, the appalling precariousness of man's situation in Africa, because Paris presented itself to me, with the simplicity of evidence, as an assurance of our survival. When I arrived the weather was unbelievably lovely and the gracious controlled beauty of the city kept moving me to tears. Does that sound silly? But think a minute. We've known nothing, for as long as we can remember, but stupidity or knavery in high places. Or both. We've heard nothing but the roaring of the beast. The ancient stones which Europeans have been placing, one upon the other, for centuries, have been idiotically smashed and beaten down, frequently with our own bazookas and aerial bombs. And those of us who believed that the colossus, our country, must forever humanize itself in the contemplation of these stones and in dialogue with the spirit that created them, have been fearful and disheartened.

Yet here, in April, 1945, on the banks of this little river, and on the islets which held the fortress of the Parisii, allies of Caesar, is a City, built by men and for men, a habitat on the human scale, a monument to our ancestors. I turn right from the Place du Palais-Bourbon and walk along the Boulevard Saint-Germain. The broad street is lined with trees, tender trees which crack no pavements and carefully moderate the spread of their branches, sifting through their dark greenness the grey luminosity which is evening here. I may stop at number 180, walk to the third floor and ask Daniel Lazarus to demonstrate again why one should not play the Bach suite according to the conventional measure pattern. I may ask Jean Mousset to talk about the little hidden churches near Saint-Sulpice. They are ironic, learned men. They belong here. The solid masonry of the buildings is unobtrusive: each construction is different, yet modulated each to each, so that there is a whole, an ancient elaborated collectivity, a communion in time. This is not simply a double row of buildings. This is the Boulevard du Faubourg Saint-Germain. And if I turn north and walk to the Seine, where the booksellers are shutting up their stalls, I find that the bridges which lead to the Louvre, or to Notre Dame, and the great triumphant architectural masses themselves, have molded themselves to the color of the earth, the water and the sky. This is not simply a collection of buildings, this is the city, man's city.

With the balmy weather came the first batches of returning prisoners, filthy, ragged and hungry, each with his history of boredom or horror. Frenay's Ministry for Prisoners and Deported was immediately swamped, and Paris has been filled with depressing stories about the inadequacy and confusion of the government services in the face of this stupendous task. At the same time, French correspondents have been wandering about in the land of Apocalypse, appalled, I suspect, not only by the spectacle of Buchenwald, Belsen-Belsen, Dachau etc., but also by the apparently irreductible *Menschlichkeit* of the people in whose

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name these things were done. They fill the columns of their dailies (format: one half of one page) with stories and pictures of the camps; and each story is another turn of the screw for the millions of anguished French who have not yet heard from their sons and husbands in Germany. (Something like two million French men and women are still wandering about in the overturned anthills of the Reich.) As for the rest, the dangerously endearing humanity of the enemy, they have not yet discovered how to discuss it seriously in a general attitude of grim exultation at *la guerre chez eux,* finally *chez eux.* Yet there are many talented and honest writers among them, Pierre Jarry, Peyronnet, Claude Roy, Pierre Courtade, men who realize that abstractions are useful but that the reporter's job is to sharpen or alter concepts in accordance with what he sees. Talking to them, one comes to feel that, intellectually at least, the Frenchmen who were well-treated in Germany constitute *for them* an even more difficult problem than the typhic phantoms they found in Buchenwald. Pierre Jarry, for example, whose passion, honesty and culture make him a *witness* rather than a reporter in the American sense (most of our agency hacks and headline fabricators would consider it a dishonor to write so well), is much concerned with the French peasants and neo-peasants who have "colonized" Germany, i.e., settled down on the land and in the bed of the farmer's wife. The land is rich and beautiful, the patronne is buxom and pleasant (her husband is buried in Russia, Italy, France or Tunisia). These men, says Jarry, are peasants, they can't simply leave the land, there's a crop to get in. But after?

In short, the French, who have been telling us for the past few years that we were eternally incapable of understanding the Teuton, have discovered on the roads and in the villages of Germany that the *guerre chez eux* is no solution, but only the beginning of a desperately complicated mess. The collapse of Germany is not simply military: it is the dissolution of all structures, the reduction of this artificially galvanized people to the lowest possible social unit (e.g. the frequent stories of neighbors pillaging each other): the family. Where there was a menace, there is a vast milling emptiness. Where there was indignation and "resistance," there is the abiding political problem: what is to be done?

One hears much talk in Paris, these days, of the general lassitude of the country: the French have surely had enough of physical terror, material difficulty and moral ambiguity to last them forever. Yet the Parisians came out in large numbers to vote, last Sunday, despite the confusion of the electoral lists (which the minuscule press did nothing to clear up, of course) and the general feeling that these, municipal, elections—held before the return of the vast majority of the prisoners—could not materially affect the situation. The results surprised everyone and not least the Communists, who were the principal victors of the day. The new party of "Christian Democrats" (Schumann, Bidault, Teitgen etc.) made a triumphal debut, and the Communists promptly announced

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that they would exclude the *démocrates chrétiens* from the united left ticket which is to be presented next week at the run-off elections. The Socialists, with some reluctance, have agreed to this exclusion, so that we shall now see what the Christian Democrats can do on an independant list. One thing is certain: the Communist manoeuver is bound to push this new party to the right.

What are the general political perspectives? I don't know. Nobody knows. One of my friends, a young Frenchman whose post-1940 history —and there are so many like him!—reads like an escape-novel, remarked with bitterness the other day that when six Parisians arrived simultaneously at a newspaper stand, nowadays, they invariably formed a line. Before the war, he said, they simply waited, like free men. "Vichy has corrupted us more than you think." The subtler effects of this corruption would require more than the scope of this letter for expression; and more than three weeks in Paris. But I find here, as in Algiers, a general atmosphere of confusion, bad conscience and cynicism among certain elites which are vital to this fantastically centralized country. This is particularly true of the administrative bureaucracy and the students of the great schools which periodically renew it.

Nevertheless, one element in the situation is enough to convince you of the political "toughness" and energy of the country. De Gaulle who in Algiers assumed, whether he wanted to or no, the proportions and trappings of a *führer*, is now becoming in a very curious way irrelevant: he administers but except perhaps in diplomacy takes no irremediable positions; and since he had announced no internal program beyond a vague "renovation" the political struggle takes form without reference to him. In what sense is this a sign of political vitality? In Algiers, the presence of De Gaulle was enough to stifle the political struggle, at least to adjourn it. No one could do that here, no matter what his foreign politics might be. In Algiers, there was no *people of France.*

Which means that De Gaulle must either descend into the arena and take sides or become something very much like a prewar President de la Republique.

Meanwhile, of course, the vitality of Paris is distilled in subtler form than ballots and speeches. There are some twenty dailies, many of which are extremely literary in tone (a single issue of *Figaro,* despite the postage-stamp format, may carry articles by Mauriac, Claudel and Jean-Paul Sartre; Albert Camus frequently writes the leading article of *Combat; Le Monde,* which is simple *Le Temps,* rebaptised, carries regular literary chronicles by Robert Kemp, Emile Henriot, etc.). Of the fifty or sixty weeklies, the most literate are *Les Lettres Françaises,* founded by Aragon in the clandestine period of the *Editions de Minuit,* and *Les Nouvelles Littéraires; Nuit et Jour, Action, Gavroche, Carrefour, Le*

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Temps présent, Témoignage Chrétien are essentially political, but not only are their politics (like everything else in this country) extremely literary, but they all devote a considerable amount of space to poetry, fiction and the discussion of what is going on in theatres, concert-halls and bookshops. The dramatic season, I gather from them, has not been particularly brilliant; yet Mauriac has presented *Les Mal aimés,* Dullin has done an unsuccessful *King Lear* (in oriental costume!) and André Gide's translation of *Anthony and Cleopatra* has been "hailed," as they say on Broadway, in very triumphant terms. (There's also been an elaborate *Midsummer Night's Dream,* still running). Jouvet has lectured on his long South American trip and published an interesting piece on Giraudoux and the theory of the actor, which he developed while watching the author of *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu* breathe with his personnages, at the rehearsals. Valéry has presented a reading of a part of his *Faust,* at the *Comédie Française,* and next week is to preside over a lecture to be delivered by T. S. Eliot, on the social role of the poet. But, since my arrival, at least, the event of the season has been Jean-Paul Sartre's *Huis-clos,* at the Vieux-Colombier, and the polemic on existentialism which has spread from the reviews to the literary press.

About two weeks ago, Hélène Bokanowski, whom I had known in Algiers, took me to the Cafe des Deux Magots and, as we sat drinking ersatz coffee in an atmosphere of ersatz cigarettes, pointed out various unknown personalities who were all in one way or another quite brilliant and astonishing. "Of course," she said, "this is the anti-existentialist cafe. The other crowd go across the street to the Café de Flore. No existentialist with self-respect would take his ersatz aperitif here."

Or was it vice-versa?

In any case, the anti-existentialists claim that the question is, quite literally, to be or not to be. Sartre, they say, with his theory of self-determined and lonely being, and Camus, who posits the essential absurdity of all values, are removing man from history and sapping the basic impulsions of action. (Note that the two leading exponents of this new quietism are both politically very active).

I haven't seen *Huis-clos.* Nor have I yet been able to procure Sartre's *L'Etre et le Neànt,* or Camus' *Le Mythe de Sisyphe,* or Simone de Beauvoir's *Pyrrhus et Cineas* (there is a black market in books as in everything else). These are the basic texts of the discussion and I find it repugnant to try to give you an account of it without having read them. Pierre Emmanuel, the poet, has published a brilliant note on Sartre's philosophy, but since he quotes sparingly—and then largely for the purpose of making the existentialists say what they do not want to say—you will forgive me for declining to rush in at the moment.

However, before leaving this, the liveliest literary movement in France, until my next letter, it is worth remarking that any history of its origin would be much concerned with the influence of the American novel and,

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I suspect, at least indirectly, of American pragmatism. This despite the fact that these people have obviously read much Heidegger and Kierkegaard, and little if any John Dewey. (In last week's *Gavroche,* Etienne Lalou makes an astonishing *Defense du Roman français;* he denounces the influence of the American novel which, unlike Huxley or Woolf or Dostoevsky, is *imperialistic,* i.e., tends to install its psychology and its character on French soil. Let the American bring to the bar of World Literature their conception of man, he says, but we too have a contribution to make in this respect!) *Le Mur,* which circulated a good deal in New York, a few years ago, as well as *La Nausee,* Sartre's remarkable novel, show not precisely the influence of Hemingway and Faulkner respectively, but rather a profound preoccupation with certain esthetic and moral problems implicit in the work of the Americans. I mean problems of which Hemingway and Faulkner are quite unaware. Camus' *L'Etranger,* which is a "younger" book and reveals influences more readily, demonstrates the same point: the young French writers who have been reading with such intense admiration the works of Hemingway, Faulkner, Caldwell, Dos Passos and, more recently, Steinbeck and Saroyan, have transformed the style and onset of these writers into explicit ideas; these in turn have been transposed into images which (in the measure of the skill and passion of the writer) have had significant reference to contemporary French experience. They have intellectualized, for example, the loneliness of the American hero, the brutality or cold hostility of his world. And this is in accordance with a training and a tradition wherein the "cult of experience" does not exclude the experience of ideas.

H. J. Kaplan

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The Scout Master*

PETER TAYLOR

THAT YEAR all the young people in Nashville were saying, "Don't tell me that, old dear, because it makes me *too* unhappy." It was *the* answer to almost anything that could be said.

You could hear Virginia Ann saying it to her beaux in the parlor up in front. She had her own special way of saying it and would sometimes give new emphasis to the irony by saying "too, too, too unhappy" or by beginning with "Please, please don't tell me that." Whenever she said it loud enough for Father to hear her all the way back in the sitting room, he would say that he could not bear to hear her using that expression, though he said he didn't know why he could not. "I can't abide it," he would say. "That's all there is to it."

In the hall there was a picture of Father at the age of six, still wearing what he called his kilts but large enough to be holding the reins of a big walking horse on the back of which was seated Uncle Jake. My Uncle Louis, too, in his first pants, was in the picture. He was seated on the grass underneath the horse's belly with his arms about the neck of a big Airedale. (But Uncle Louis had died of parrot fever when he was only twelve.) Virginia Ann would show the picture to her beaux as they were leaving at night. It was always good for a laugh, especially if it was a new beau that had just met Father or Uncle Jake, who was living at our house then. "Really," she would say, harking back to the thing that all the young people had said last year, "I think that picture is *truly* a sugar." And she would point out Father's long curls and the lace on the hem of Uncle Jake's dress. Father would say that he could not abide that expression either.

I used to hear Uncle Jake asking Father very gently why he was so "hard on" Virginia Ann and asking if he didn't know that all "modern girls" were like that. And I would sit and wonder why he was so hard on her. Father would say sometimes that he couldn't explain it even to himself.

Mother found just as much fault with Virginia Ann, but she never worried about explaining what it was that was wrong. She would tell Uncle Jake and Aunt Grace (who was not Uncle Jake's wife but

* "The Scout Master" is one of the two novelettes awarded third prize in the PARTISAN REVIEW-DIAL Contest.

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Mother's own sister, staying with us then after her divorce from Uncle Bazil)—she would tell them that as each of her children passed seventeen she intended either to give them up as a bad job or, if they didn't all turn out as Virginia Ann had, to sit back and rest on her laurels. Yet Mother's groans were as loud as Father's when they heard Virginia Ann greeting her date at the front door with, "Well, well, well, if it isn't my country cousin!" I would turn my eyes to her and Father as soon as I heard Virginia Ann say this, for I knew it was one of the things they could not abide.

Aunt Grace was never gentle with people the way Uncle Jake was. She would tell Mother and Father that they were real fools to be so critical of Virginia Ann, who she said was one of the brightest, cleanest girls she had ever known. Hadn't this daughter of theirs had the finest average in her junior class? And wasn't she studying practical things even in high school (Business Administration, Accounting, Shorthand!)? Father and Mother would nod and smile. Father would be put in such a grand good humor by Aunt Grace's admiration of his daughter that he would begin to tease her about some unmarried man or other in their acquaintance. Or he would take off his spectacles and smile benevolently at her as she ranted, she now making a show of her outspokenness: Wasn't Virginia Ann's behavior with her beaux above all suspicion? she would ask. Certainly she was one of the few young girls who never—Never once! Aunt Grace could vouch for it. *She* had the girl's confidence—never stepped outside the front door to say goodnight to her date.

"Poor Grace!" Father and Mother would sit for a long while after one of these outbursts and lament the hard lot that had been Aunt Grace's. Uncle Bazil was such a hopeless ne'er-do-well, really a drunken scoundrel whose vanity and social ambitions had been his ruination; and yet they believed that deep in her heart Grace loved him still. And that was going to make it hard for her ever to marry again. How sad it was. She was still a comparatively young woman. "Today women of thirty-eight are looked upon as quite young, you know," one of them would say.

And, for all she had been through, they agreed, Aunt Grace showed her years remarkably little. Whoever would have guessed that she was actually only five years younger than dear, sweet Jake? She had a certain girlish prettiness about her that would always deny her age.

Yet it wasn't that Uncle Jake's own sad life told on him ("No

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one has ever borne such sadnesses as his with so fine a spirit"), but, Father explained, Jake had had a motherless daughter to raise and to nurse through a fatal illness at the age of nineteen, and that had kept him old fashioned. Even if this motherless daughter of his had not been a prig and a fanatic—His daughter had died at nineteen from a skin disease she had caught in her social work. Her name had been Margaret, but he had always called her "Presh" for "precious"—even if she had not been such a one, Uncle Jake would have remained old fashioned, Father explained, because just raising a child did that for one.

Aunt Grace stayed with us for six weeks after she had gotten her divorce. The morning that she left for her job in Birmingham I came and sat beside her on the porch swing. She pulled me up close to her and beckoned to Brother to come and sit at her other side. "I've stayed here on you forever," she said to Mother and Father who were seated about the porch with Virginia Ann and Uncle Jake, "and these two rascals are not the least of my reasons for it." Simultaneously she pressed Brother and myself so tightly to her that we found ourselves face to face, each with a cheek lying against the blue linen cloth of the travelling suit she and Virginia Ann had been sewing on for a week. Brother had just reached the age to join Uncle Jake's Boy Scout Troop, and it occurred to me that if Aunt Grace was so very young Brother would soon be old enough to marry her himself. I looked into his eyes to see if he were going to cry about her going away. But he was looking back at me with a grin on his face. Presently he stuck out his tongue, curled it up on each side till it looked like a tulip, and before I could pull away from Aunt Grace's clasp he had blown a spit bubble in my face.

A fight ensued right across Aunt Grace's lap. It was a furious, noisy scuffle and it lifted the new linen skirt in a hundred creases and wrinkles. Yet Aunt Grace's good humor remained unruffled. And as Uncle Jake's large and gentle hands pulled us apart I caught a quick glimpse of my aunt's face. Her head was thrown back, as to avoid the blows. Her soft creamlike complexion seemed to have just a little more color than usual. Her big blue eyes, matching her blue hat and her blue travelling suit, were squinted as they always were when she laughed. Between her bursts of laughter she was saying, "Look! Look at the little demons. See them! I wish you could see their eyes flashing."

It was Brother and myself that Aunt Grace took with her in the taxi. All of the grown-ups had, of course, wanted to go with her to the station. Uncle Jake had even brought his car from the garage, and Father's car always stayed in front of the house. But she would

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let neither of them drive her to the depot. She would not even let Virginia Ann — who tried with Aunt Grace to make a joke about the parting though there were certainly tears caught in the long lashes of her small brown eyes — Aunt Grace would not even let her go along. They were both very gay, but Aunt Grace's gaiety had so much more unity and was so much more convincing and contagious that you hardly noticed Virginia Ann's.

When the taxi came she made everyone but the children say goodbye to her on the porch. Brother and I helped the driver take her luggage to the cab, and we waited in the back seat while she walked down the front walk with her arm about our sister's waist. Just before they reached the cab they even skipped for a few steps and sang without any special tune, "Look out, Birmingham, here comes the widow from Nashville, Tenn-tenn-tennessee."

They stopped a minute at the car door and we heard Virginia Ann saying, "I'll keep you posted on my progress with you-know-who and such stuff. It'll be, 'Dear Miss Dix, I care deeply for someone who . . .' "

"Oh, he'll come around," Aunt Grace said, "I know the type — silent, serious, indifferent."

"I'll write you all about it."

"You write me, Virginia Ann. But, Virginia Ann, here's one piece from your Aunt Dorothy before she goes: Let the boys be fools about you. Don't you ever be the fool. *Don't* be a little fool for any boy."

Virginia Ann blushed and then laughed in a high, excited voice. Aunt Grace laughed too, and they kissed each other goodbye.

It was mine and Brother's first ride in a taxi cab, and we were going to ride the streetcar home, a thing which we had not done many times unless accompanied by Father. I sat gazing first at the noisy meter, then at the picture of the driver on his license that hung beside the rearview mirror. We rode for several blocks through the streets lined with the two story residences, each approximating a square or oblong shape, each roofed with tile, or slate, or painted shingle, each having a porch built of the same solid materials appended to the front or the side of the house, each with a yard big enough for perhaps one, two or three trees, every last one of these houses with features so like those of my father's house that they failed to rouse any curiosity in me. And so finally I turned and simply looked at Aunt Grace.

She was just then peering over the cardboard hatbox that she held most carefully on her lap, trying to see the time by her tiny

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wristwatch. Her white gloved forefinger and thumb pushed the glove of the other hand from a white silk cuff (a dainty yet full cuff extending below the blue sleeve of her coat suit) and she was bending cautiously over the big round box to get a view of the dial. I climbed to my knees and myself peered over to the face of that little white gold ornament. When I saw that the tiny black hands actually told the correct time of day I experienced a breath-taking amazement.

But I raised my eyes to Aunt Grace's face, and no longer did it seem that the watch was the cause of my amazement. I felt myself growing timid in her presence, for she had become a stranger to me. The hatbox, the watch, the white gloves, the absurdly full silk cuffs, the blue linen suit on which she had labored so long and so painstakingly, and even the tiny brown bows on her white shoes all took on a significance. The watch seemed to have been but a key. And all of those things that had once indicated that Aunt Grace was one sort of person now indicated that she was quite another sort. She was not the utterly useless if wonderfully ornamental member of the family. In the solid blueness of her eyes I was surely on the verge of finding some marvellous function for her personality (I would have said my mother's function was Motherhood and my father's, Fatherhood.). I was about to find the reason why there should be one member of a boy's family who was wise or old-fashioned enough to sit with Mother and Father and discuss the things they could not abide in Virginia Ann and yet who was foolish or newfangled enough to enjoy the very things that Virginia Ann called "the last word." But it was precisely then that the cab stopped before the entrance to the dirty limestone railroad depot, and Uncle Bazil stepped up and opened the automobile door.

I hopped out onto the sidewalk and Brother after me, he taking the small suitcase and I the cardboard hatbox which I held by a heavy black ribbon that was tied in a bow knot above the side of the box. Aunt Grace followed us straightening her straw hat with her left hand, clasping her white purse under her right arm. She and Uncle Bazil began to talk as though they were strangers making pleasant conversation. It seemed that Aunt Grace did not cease her chatter and her excited laughter from the time she left the taxi until we saw her on the train.

Uncle Bazil's very presence was itself shocking, but I was even more astonished to find him unchanged in appearance. Actually I must have recognized him by his smart attire — his plaid coat and white trousers — for it had been fully a year since he had been to our house. I had expected dissipation to show not only in his face but

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in his dress as well. He paid the taxi driver over Aunt Grace's protests and summoned a negro red-cap to take all the luggage. Brother and I followed them into the station.

We followed them under the high, vaulted ceiling of the lobby and into the station yard. All the while Aunt Grace's laughter could be heard above the hum of people whom, one and all, I imagined to be taking their final farewell of one another. When we were in the station yard her laughter seemed to reach even a higher pitch.

Finally we were waiting beside the sleeping car into which the redcap had taken Aunt Grace's luggage. Brother and I studied the black wheels and the oily brakes underneath the car. The conductor in blue called, "Ullaboward." I looked up and saw Uncle Bazil speaking with an expression on his face that was half serious and half playful. Aunt Grace stopped laughing just long enough to say something that made him blush. She told him not to tell her *that,* because it made her too, too unhappy. Then she turned from him to us and stooping down she put her arms around Brother and myself and kissed us again and again. "Put these two rascals on the streetcar, will you, Bazil?"

When she stepped into the dark vestibule of the sleeping car I saw a bit of the lace that hemmed her "slip" showing from beneath her blue skirt. I felt that it was more like the wide lace on Mother's pettycoats than the little strips on Virginia Ann's. The train began to move, and she was still in the vestibule looking over the conductor's shoulder. Presently she began to laugh as she waved to us. I suddenly turned my face so as not to see the enormous spread of her smile, but for several seconds it seemed that I could hear the sound of her strange, high laughter above the noise and commotion of the train.

Uncle Jake used afterwards to repeat the witty things that Aunt Grace had said when she was staying with us. Often times when the clock on the mantel of the upstairs sitting room chimed he would remind the other members of the family — sometimes only with a smile—of what Grace used to say about the quarter-hourly chiming. "Remember what Grace used to say, 'I'd as soon have someone come and knock on my door every fifteen minutes of the night and say, 'Fifteen minutes have passed,' as have that clock in a house of mine.' "

He would talk about what a happy nature Aunt Grace had. Whenever Mother said that she worried about how Aunt Grace was getting on in Birmingham with her new job, he would say that Aunt Grace would always be happy, that she was one of those fortunate people who have a special faculty for happiness. He would sometimes re-

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call the songs that she and Virginia Ann had sung together when they washed dishes on Sunday night. They were the only popular songs he had ever seemed to catch on to. He would speak of her as the "Sleepy Time Gal," for she had called herself that whenever she came down to breakfast later than the rest of the family or whenever she went up to bed earlier. You could hear her on the stairs singing in a voice that mimicked the blues-singers we heard on the radio:

. . . you're turning night into day
My little stay at home, play at home, sleepy time gal.

At night especially her voice seemed to drift through the whole house like a wisp of smoke. Sometimes before bed she and Virginia Ann would don their most outlandishly faded and ragged wrappers and with cold-cream on their faces and with their hair in a hundred metal curlers they would waltz about the bare floor of the upstairs hall singing. They would sing "I'd Climb The Highest Mountain" or "It's Three O'Clock In The Morning." But the song that Uncle Jake said he could not help liking best of all was called, "Melancholy Baby." Mother and Father said it was no better than other new songs. Father would say, "I think maybe it's even a little *more* suggestive, Jake, than the usual run." But Uncle Jake said that it had more of the old time feeling in it and that it put one in a mood the way music was supposed to do. So he would sit and listen while Virginia Ann accompanied herself and Aunt Grace on the piano:

Every cloud must have a silver lining.
Wait until the sun shines through.

So smile, my honey dear,
While I kiss away each tear,
Or else I shall be melancholy too.

Yet it wasn't Aunt Grace alone that Uncle Jake remembered kindly. He had a good word even for Uncle Bazil, if it was only to say, "Bazil has a way with him that you can't help liking."

Whenever Father and Mother were out for dinner Uncle Jake was likely to spend the whole meal talking to us about our good fortune at having such splendid parents. "Your father," he'd say, "puts all of his brothers and sisters to shame, and your mother is certainly the choice of her mother's brood . . . There is no finer woman in the South than your mother, and no business man in town is res-

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pected more than your father . . . I declare I don't know any other parents these days who live as much for their children as yours do. It's always looked to me like they each learned secrets of happiness from their parents that none of the rest of us did . . . You children are their whole life, and you ought to remember that."

After such a speech not one of us was able to speak. Virginia Ann's eyes would always fill with tears. And one evening Uncle Jake went so far as to say that Mother and Father were just the sort of parents that his and Father's own had been and that he sometimes woke in the night and wept at the realization that his parents were actually dead and that he could never, never make amends to them for the little worries he had caused them.

And that night Virginia Ann did burst right out crying. She wept in her napkin and I thought she sounded like a little kitten begging to get out of the cellar or to get in the house when it was raining. I almost cried myself to think of poor Uncle Jake in his room crying, and I swore that I should not postpone making my amends to my own mother and father even till the next morning. (I waited, in fact, all that evening in the living room for them to come in, lying on my stomach before the fire. But I dropped off to sleep with my eyes set on the orange glow of the coals, and when I awoke it was morning. I was in my bed with Brother where Uncle Jake had placed me.)

Whenever all the family were at the table Uncle Jake would often talk of the saintly nature of Uncle Louis who had died at the age of twelve from parrot fever. Neither he nor Father could remember ever having heard Uncle Louis speak an unkind word or remember his misbehaving in any manner. Once their father — the two of them would recall—had come through the strawberry patch behind the old house on the Nolansville Pike and found Uncle Jake and Father playing mumble-the-peg while Uncle Louis did all the berry picking. And when Uncle Louis saw his father stripping off his belt to give his brothers a whipping he ran to him and told him that he, as the elder brother, was to blame for not making them work and that he should receive the punishment. My grandfather had turned and walked to his house without another word.

Whenever Father and Uncle Jake talked about that incident Father would say that Grandfather walked away in disgust. But Uncle Jake would say that he walked away toward the house in order that they should not see how moved he was by Uncle Louis' brotherly love and spirit of self-sacrifice.

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Father was not as tall as Uncle Jake when they were standing, but that was only because Uncle Jake had such long legs. When we were seated at the table they seemed to be of the same height. Each had an extremely high forehead and a pointed chin that Uncle Jake said they had got from their Mother's people. Nothing could hold my interest more keenly in those days than watching them sit together at table after dinner when Mother and Virginia Ann had gone into the living room. Sometimes they would only sit and smoke in silence. Sometimes they would talk about the old times.

One night when they had talked about the negroes who had worked their father's farm, about Cousin Lucy Grimes who turned Catholic and later went completely crazy, and about the meanness of their Uncle Bennett who lost his leg at the Battle of Stone River, they turned again to the subject of Uncle Louis' native sweetness. While they talked, I looked across the table from one to the other trying to discover why they did not really look alike since their individual features were so similar. I felt that they actually did look alike and that I was just blind to it in some way. The only differences that I could see were not ones of my own observation but differences that I had heard Mother point out now and again: Uncle Jake had lived outdoors so much with his hunting and fishing and his other activities with the Boy Scouts that his skin was considerably rougher than Father's, who had no real life but in his office and in our house. Too, Uncle Jake's hair was still a hard, young, brown color whereas Father's was full of pleasant gray streaks. Yet withal there was a softness or gentleness about his eyes and about the features of Uncle Jake's face that were not to be found in Father's kind but strong countenance.

After dinner Mother would always switch off the principal light as she left the dining room, and the men's talking was done in softer illumination from the sidewall lamps.

Brother had gone one night and climbed into Father's lap. I was sitting beside Uncle Jake, and I leaned my head over on his knee. It seemed that the lights were lower than usual that night, and the negro cook in her white serving apron seemed to take longer than ever in removing the dishes. She kept reaching over me to clear the dishes from mine and Uncle Jake's place, and once she told me to sit up and quit being a bother to my Uncle Jake. But he, without turning his eyes from Father, laid his hand lightly across my chest to hold me there; and the cook went off to the sideboard shaking her head. Uncle Jake had not spoken for a long while. He had sat smoking his white-bowled pipe and listening to Father, but I could tell now by

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the twitching at the corner of his mouth that he was finally about to speak. When his lips parted and he simultaneously removed the pipe I remarked the long distance between the point of his chin and his eyes and noticed that the eyes themselves were set far apart and were rather popped, I thought, from this upsidedown view.

Addressing Father as "Brother" — a thing he did only when they were reminiscing—he began to speak of Uncle Louis. He lifted his eyes to the ceiling, and from where I lay it seemed that he had rolled his eyeballs far back into his head; and I noticed the strange animal-like moisture of his upper lip. "Brother," he said, "I was playing with Louis one day under the Mulberry tree at the end of the side porch. We had a couple of pill boxes that old Dr. Pemberton had given us and we had caught two of the caterpillars that fell from the Mulberry tree. With some black thread from Mama's basket we were hitching the poor fuzzy worms to the little boxes and then filling the boxes with sand to see how heavy a load the caterpillars could manage. But Louis quite accidentally pulled the thread so tightly about the middle of one of them that he cut the little fellow half in two. Then he looked at me silently across the two pieces of worm. And, mind you, after several seconds he scrambled to his feet and ran the length of the porch to where Mama was sitting with her sewing in her lap.

"I followed hot on his heels and stood by watching him as he fell on his knees and hid his face in her sewing. Pretty soon when he began to weep and shake all over — more like a girl than a boy — Mama thought he had hurt himself on the scissor or a needle and she jerked him up from her lap. He could not speak for his sobbing, and when I had told Mama that he had only cut a little worm half in two with a piece of thread, she drew him to her, smiling and patting his head tenderly. When at last he was able to speak he said, "I killed the little caterpillar, Mama, and he'll never, never come back to life."

Uncle Jake was stirring unconsciously in his chair as he spoke, and I raised up from his lap and peered across the table cloth into Father's face. His mouth literally hung open, and he said, "Why, Jake, I've never heard you tell that before."

Uncle Jake replaced his pipe between his teeth and chewed on it. He said, "Brother, I never had much heart for telling it, because it happened the same summer he caught the fever." And in a few minutes he got up and went over and unlocked the door to the porch that nobody ever used. Before he went out Father called him in a very stern voice, but he went out anyway and sat on the porch for a

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long time by himself, still smoking his pipe. In the living room I asked Father if he supposed Uncle Jake was thinking about Uncle Louis. He said he supposed he was thinking about Aunt Margaret his wife who had died so many, many years ago and about their daughter who had been a prig and fanatic. Mother said that Father should not talk that way before the children.

Virginia Ann had innumerable beaux. It used to seem on Sunday afternoons that all the young men in Nashville had flocked to our house, some for but a few minutes' visit, others to make an all afternoon stay. Father called them the Arabs and the Indians. The Arabs were the timid or sulky boys who stayed a short while and then moved silently on to some other house. The Indians were those bold ones who, he said, camped or squatted on his property for the eternity of a whole Sunday afternoon.

Father really did seem to despise the Indians. But it was the Indians who were Uncle Jake's delight. He would sit and talk to them while Virginia Ann gave her attention to those whose devotion had not been proved. And when they all had finally gone, he never failed to pretend that he was worried because Virginia Ann would not choose what he called a steady from among them. He would stop Virginia Ann as she was straightening up the parlor or perhaps by the newel post at the foot of the stair and, rolling his eyes speculatively, he would enumerate the good and bad qualities of each of those he considered potential steadies.

Virginia Ann would listen, pretending, like himself, to be in dead earnestness. I could not have told that they were not speaking their literal thoughts had it not been for the pompous gestures Uncle Jake made with his hands whenever he was making fun and for the broad smile that broke upon Virginia Ann's face whenever Uncle Jake mentioned the devotion to herself which some young Indian had confided in him.

It was at the dinner table one night in the presence of all the family that Uncle Jake began to describe a conversation he had had with Bill Evers. He began by professing to believe that Bill Evers was the beau whom Virginia Ann should choose as her steady. The things he was saying were so much of the kind he had so often said to her about other young men that I did not really listen at first. I only remarked the mock seriousness in the tone of his voice and saw him batting his eyes as he concealed a smile behind his coffee cup. Several times I watched him bring his cup up in rather a hurry to his lips and, as often before, I studied the wide gold band on the third finger of

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his left hand. Uncle Jake had large hands, and I thought, as I studied them, of how much softer to the touch they were than one could imagine from their rough appearance.

It was likely the word "revolver" that finally made me listen to what he was actually saying about that particular one of the Indians. "Yes, Bill Evers tells me," he said, "that he is never afraid anywhere on the darkest night or in the wildest country as long as he has his revolver." And Uncle Jake each time he pronounced "revolver" would roll it out magnificently.

Virginia Ann's face suddenly blossomed into a broad smile that showed her lovely white teeth and revealed perhaps here and there little splotches of orange-red paint that Mother said she applied "so liberally" to her lips.

Then Uncle Jake reported several of the incidents wherein Bill Evers had felt himself more secure for having his revolver by his side. Once he had been camping in the Baxter Hills. Another time he had been hunting along Duck River and had met a couple of old moonshiners whom Bill had described as "very much intoxicated." Whenever Uncle Jake was quoting Bill directly he would deepen his voice and roll his r's, and for some reason this made Virginia Ann blush. It was, of course, because Bill was the only one of her beaux that really had a man's voice. And it seemed that Uncle Jake by deepening his voice was referring to that fact rather too persistently and somehow indelicately. Possibly I was the first to feel that Virginia Ann was no longer feigning that sober expression that had settled on her face now. I was watching her when Uncle Jake said, "Bill Evers is never afraid so long as he has his revolver by his side. 'My revolver,' Bill told me, 'is my best friend and just let any fellow take care who meddles with me when I have my revolver by my side'."

Without warning, Virginia Ann sprang from the table weeping, not like a kitten but like a wounded animal in the forest. She ran from the dining room crying, "Oh, you're too cruel. You're heartless."

Uncle Jake seemed unable to move or to speak. He looked helplessly from Father to Mother whose faces registered nothing but half amused surprise. Then he pushed back his chair and hurried clumsily after Virginia Ann calling, "Child. . . . Child." Brother and I each slipped from our chairs to follow, but Mother and Father, who were now looking at one another, smiling and shaking their heads sadly, turned quickly to us and commanded us to return to our seats.

"Poor Jake," Father said, "always has to pay for what fun he has in life."

Mother continued to take an occasional sip from her white coffee

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cup. Finally she sighed, "Poor Jake. I'm sure he hadn't suspected how things are."

Father raised his eyebrows. After a moment he shook his head emphatically and said that Mother was reading things into this incident. "The girl's just tired tonight," he said. "She doesn't give a snap for the boy."

Mother shook her head with equal emphasis. "No. Grace told me before she left." She replaced her cup in its saucer but continued for several seconds to hold to its handle with her thumb and forefinger. "I must say I thought Bill Evers had long since passed out of her head. There *was* a time when young girls confided such prolonged crushes in their mothers."

From somewhere in the front part of the house we could hear Uncle Jake's voice apologizing and entreating. Eventually we began to hear Virginia Ann reassuring him. And I recalled then how in front of the church one Sunday, after services, I had been tugging at Uncle Jake's hand, trying to pull him away from a crowd of men who were talking foxhound and bird dog. My eyes, as I tugged, were on an old negro man who was selling bags of peanuts on the street corner. I saw that the vendor was closing the lid to the primitive cart that he pushed and was preparing to move to another corner. I tugged at Uncle Jake's hand and turned to beg him to come along. But upon turning my eyes to him I saw that he had somehow managed to slip my hand into that of a strange man; and he and all the others were standing about laughing at me.

With a violent jerk I had broken loose and had run off down the street in a beastly rage. When Uncle Jake finally caught me he held me and knelt on one knee before me imploring humbly that I forgive him (instead of cajoling as most men would have done). And silently I began to blame myself for not having realized that the hand I had been pulling on had a hardness and coarseness about it that I should have distinguished from that of my gentle uncle's.

"Poor Jake." Mother used to say that Father was "an omnivorous reader," and I would say myself when I was nine or ten that she and he were both "omnivorous talkers" when they were alone together. They talked about everything and everyone under the sun. They didn't talk especially kindly or unkindly about people, but I felt that in the years of their married life they had certainly left nothing that came into either of their heads unsaid. I was sometimes surprised to hear them speak with such detachment of Virginia Ann or Brother or Uncle Jake. "Poor Jake," Father would say, "he's really incapable

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of being very realistic about his dealing with people. His real calling, his real profession is, you know, that of the Scout Master. It's during those Thursday night Meetings with the boys that poor Jake fulfills himself. I always knew that he'd never make a great go of it in business, and sometimes when he tells me that he should have held on to the homeplace and farmed it, I can barely keep from telling him that somebody would have gotten it away from him and that he would have ended up as the tenant, forever recollecting the good-old-days, y' know, when it was our own." Mother would say that she didn't understand how he had done even as good a job of raising poor Presh as he did.

"Presh's religious mania, it's always seemed to me," Mother would say, "began as very much the same sort of thing as Jake's nostalgia. It was all tied up with notions of her mother's existence in Heaven. Toward the last her social work consisted mostly of preaching to those wretched poor people in East Nashville about her mother in Heaven. She could just not be bothered with any real view of things."

Father would speculate concerning Uncle Jake's fate and what it might have been if his wife had not died when Presh was only half grown: "If only Margaret, herself, had lived to make him and Presh a home, he might not have forever been looking to the past and being so uncritical of things in the present. He might have taken hold of himself." Here Mother would disagree. Men's natures weren't changed by circumstances, she contended. And the discussion would continue thus long after my interest had lagged.

At last I would hear Mother saying, "My Love, you simply have those age-old illusions of the male about Character and Fate. You've never really been Christianized." To which Father's favorite reply was:

"I think you mean I've never been Calvinized." Or he would say, "The female is the cynic of the species."

Then if it were bedtime they would go about the house together locking-up, shutting-down, turning-off, putting-out, arranging everything for the night. And I would hear them in their bedroom still talking as they undressed and went to bed.

Father would never help us celebrate the Fourth of July. He said that it was because Vicksburg had fallen to the Yankees on the fourth. And Uncle Jake would stand behind him and say he was exactly right, though Uncle Jake would, himself, come and help us set off the fire crackers in the back yard.

But Mother, as she and Father sat playing Russian Bank on the screened porch, would denounce Father as a hypocrite and remind

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him that he had some excuse or other for not celebrating any of the holidays in hot weather. He simply could not abide hot weather. Nothing could stir him to action from Decoration Day till after Labor Day in September. But after that it was very different. Mother would say that a week before Thanksgiving he began to develop holiday spirits that were continuous through Easter. Yet she, in turn, could not abide the cold weather; and *that,* Father maintained, was responsible for her "scaring up" such a religious point of view about Christmas and New Year's. Except for the Thanksgiving football game they would stay home on holidays reading or playing cards or maybe receiving a few friends or kinspeople. And the next day you could hear Mother on the telephone telling the woman who took her orders at the grocery: "We had a very quiet holiday at home, which is after all a more fitting way to spend such a day. . . . The children were in and out with their friends, so it was quite gay for us. . . . I think such days, after all, should be a time for the family to be together. . . . Yes, a time for us to count our blessings."

Uncle Jake never failed to comment upon the old-fashionedness of holidays at our house. When Aunt Grace had once accused Mother and Father of being together too lazy to face any kind of weather and had said that each of them was the other's worst enemy—socially, he had come forward most earnestly in their defense. He said that their mutual sacrifice of practically all social life for the sake of the other's comfort amounted to no less than "a symbol of unity."

"Besides," he said, "it's not as though they were denying themselves the sort of social gatherings that there were in-and-around Nashville a generation ago."

Aunt Grace had expressed her delight at this with several seconds of laughter so violent that she finally choked. With her face still very red, her eyes watery, and her voice hoarse she said, "How perfectly wonderful, Jake!" Then she leaned toward him, narrowing her eyes till they were two dark slits in her fair complexion, and said, "But you might be surprised, Jake, at what really grand old times some of the married set do have at their 'social gatherings' today."

Uncle Jake merely nodded soberly.

Aunt Grace laughed again, but carefully now so as not to choke. "I know what you mean," she added with a wink that had a little self consciousness about it. "Look at what it 'done done' to me."

Uncle Jake blushed and remained quite serious for a moment. But he could not long resist the persistent, infectious laughter. He smiled genially and softly repeated the phrase which he must have thought good—"A symbol of unity."

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It would sometimes be irksome to Virginia Ann that Mother planned all of the meals around Father's special tastes. Rarely did an evening meal come to our table, for instance, without there appearing on the menu either turnip salad or string-beans cooked in ham fat. Aunt Grace had amused Virginia Ann mightily at breakfast one morning by her response to Mother's complaint against the drudgery of planning meals. She had pulled a small daisy from the centerpiece and offered it to Mother saying, "All you have to do is pluck off the petals repeating, 'Turnip-greens—Beans. Turnip-greens—Beans.' And so on till you get the answer." Virginia Ann had already made this something of a sensitive subject with Mother who now only closed her eyes and pressed down imaginary creases in the table cloth with her small hand.

Father seemed no more amused than Mother by the suggestion for deciding the menu and he chose that as the signal for him to down the last of his coffee, pull his napkin loosely through his napkin ring, and go into the living room to look for the morning paper.

Uncle Jake, too, rose from his chair. But he reached out and took the daisy from Aunt Grace's hand and said slyly, "It's not a bad suggestion, Grace. But you don't understand that she's just telling her fortune the way clever women have always done. She pulls the petals not saying. 'He loves me. He loves me not,' but saying, 'He loves me. He loves me'."

Aunt Grace laughed appreciatively, "Jake, how perfectly wonderful."

But when the men had gone to work, Virginia Ann, being a little out of humor that morning, said again that she could not see why Mother had always to put Father's tastes before those of the children. Mother turned to her and spoke finally, "If you don't know why, Daughter, then let me tell you: Some fine day each of my children will have a husband or a wife or some other equally absorbing and wonderful interest in life that will take them away from me. And so some fine day I shall have only your father's tastes to cater to. I don't want there to be any doubt in his mind on that fine day that he always came first at my table. I don't like the prospect of two old souls' turning from loneliness to one another because their children have left them."

"Well spoken," said Aunt Grace soberly. But presently she began to laugh and said that she was reminded of the limerick "There was an old lady of Romany whose husband ate nothing but hominy," and Virginia Ann and Mother began to laugh too because her laughter was so infectious.

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In Nashville Thanksgiving Day might be quite warm. It might be almost a sluggishly summerlike day, and sometimes we'd find that the freakish iris in the flower bed beside the porch had a few pale, bedraggled blooms left. But, too, there will be years when it will snow at Thanksgiving time in Nashville, and everyone will be thinking so much about the problems of Christmas ahead that they have but little heart even for the football game.

Uncle Jake always went duck hunting on the week-end before Thursday so that there'd be ducks for Thanksgiving dinner. On Thanksgiving morning he went quail hunting. Dinner was usually kept waiting on him, for Mother would say that they were, after all, his ducks. But if he was very late, the tension would sometimes become unendurable, and Mother would go through the dining room, push open the swinging door a little way, and call to the cook mournfully, "Well, we'll just have to go ahead without Mr. Jake." It seems to me now that he always came in just as Father was carving the ducks. Father would go on carving the roasted fowl before him while he admired the dead partridges that Uncle Jake brought out of the large patch pockets of his khaki hunting coat. Father would stop a minute with his knife still placed in a joint of the duck and watch Uncle Jake's big fingers feeling through the soft, dark feathers over the dead bird's breast. Once I wondered momentarily whether or not I'd be able to eat my meal after seeing the poor dead partridge with the blood on its speckled neck.

But there is no aroma more affecting to the palate than that of just-carved roast duck. When the steaming slices of dark meat and drumstick were placed in front of me I had no more thoughts of the dead birds that we would eat the following Sunday. I inhaled the delicious odor of the duck, I listened to the warm, eager voices around the table, and soon I would look up to see Uncle Jake returned now in his navy blue smoking jacket and with his hands washed whiter and cleaner than I ever saw them on ordinary days.

But before Uncle Jake came there would be tension, because the Thanksgiving football game began at two o'clock. And Father and Mother, no matter the weather, did attend the Thanksgiving football game. Presumably they had long ago established this as the one really feasible outing of the year because fall weather was neither too hot nor too cold. There was also the fact that at some time in the remote past Father had been a left tackle on the University team, and Mother had come there to watch his superb tackling and blocking. Actually, too, the football game was just as necessary to Uncle Jake's happiness on that day as was his quail hunting.

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All of the grown people went to the Thanksgiving game. Virginia Ann had been going almost as far back as I could remember. Finally the year arrived when even Brother was to be allowed to go with the family; and the question was naturally raised, since I was only two years younger than he, as to whether or not I, too, should be allowed to go.

I should certainly have been taken along that day had I not shown real indifference to it. But it was considered on the whole well enough to leave me behind since Brother would be responsibility enough for Uncle Jake on this, his favorite holiday. Further, this year Virginia Ann was planning to attend, not with the rest of the family, but with Bill Evers. And this, strangely enough, involved myself.

When Brother told me that Bill Evers was her "date" for the game, I did not quite understand what he meant. For several months she had been going to movies and to dances with Bill Evers, but it just happened that I had never before noticed this use of the word "date."

Mother must have seen the puzzled expression on my countenance. She put her hand on the top of my head and explained, "Brother means that Bill Evers is going to escort Virginia Ann to the football game." It did not occur to her that "escort" meant no more to me than "date." She allowed a faint smile to play across her face that seemed to tell me that other considerations than the weight of Uncle Jake's responsibility had brought her to agreeing to leave me alone on Thanksgiving afternoon. Presently she addressed these remarks to Father and Uncle Jake, "As we used to say in the country, Bill Evers is going to carry her to the game today. And if I know Virginia Ann's beaux, he'll not come for her till after we've left for the game. Boys today don't seem to have any respect for the girls, the way they keep them waiting."

"It used to be the boys that were kept waiting," Father said. "It's really the girls' own fault. They don't require anything of them."

"It never enters Virginia Ann's head," Mother said, "whether or not promptness is a virtue in young men.'

"Well, well," Uncle Jake said rather sadly yet with the obvious intention of softening the remarks being directed against his niece, "Customs change. Everything changes."

Mother gazed about the room as though she were keeping most of her thoughts to herself. At last she absently put her hand on my head again and said that Uncle Jake was quite right, that everything

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changes. "But, in any event, my lamb here will act as chaperon when Mr. Evers does arrive today. How is the weather out, Jake?"

A cold unexpected rain fell that afternoon.

They had all observed the grey overcast sky before they left, but none of them could predict what sort of weather would result.

The rain that fell, not a downpour or a mist but a fitful and wind-driven rain, was of such an uncertain character that I could not tell whether or not it would bring the family home early.

But the wind and rain together did bring them home. The wind that sprayed the rain against the pane of the bedroom window seemed to have blown them all into the front hall at once. Or, rather, it seemed to have blown them all through the hall and into the living room where Virginia Ann and Bill Evers had for the past half hour kept a silence that I felt I could not endure another second, a silence utterly unnatural in a house where someone had always before been talking and talking.

"How dare you you get out of here you common dog." Father's voice burst upon the quietness.

Then everyone seemed to be talking at once. Mother uttered something as near to a scream as she had ever been known to utter: "Virginia Ann I want you to get yourself upstairs out of your father's sight."

"Get out of here and never let me catch you on my premises again."

"How could you take such an advantage?"

Uncle Jake spoke too, but what he said was inaudible from where I stood in the doorway to mine and Brother's room. But the sound of their voices in the house once more had filled me with confidence, had filled me with a sense of relief. Father's first indignant commands were the relief and the proof I'd been waiting for. All my feelings of shock, and fear, and resentment were gone. I could enjoy the wonderful satisfaction that Father and Mother and Uncle Jake and even Brother had been driven home by the rain to make a reality of something that I felt had been frightening because of its unreality.

I had gone to the kitchen soon after the front door had closed behind the family when they left for the game. I had waited there, watching the cook dash the pots and pans about in her great haste to get away on Thanksgiving afternoon. The doorbell finally rang, and the cook and I heard Virginia Ann in the front hall saying to Bill Evers, "Hello, Cousin." The cook ceased her noisy business long

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enough to listen to Virginia Ann's chatter and to smile over it. She shook her head and, using Virginia Ann's own language, she told me that that sister of mine had a dandy line with her boyfriends.

And from thereout the cook didn't seem to be making such a racket with the utensils she was cleaning. In a few minutes she reached her brown hand through the grey, soapy water and opened the drain of the sink. She stacked those dishes that she had not washed on the draining board and said that they would just have to go till tomorrow. Then she gathered her hat and her coat and umbrella and asked me to lock the back door behind her. "I got to make haste," she said.

When I had locked the door I gave one glance to the dirty dishes and began to move toward the dining room. But at the sound of the voices of Virginia Ann and Bill Evers I stopped in the middle of the kitchen floor. It hadn't occurred to me that those two did not leave for the football game immediately after his arrival, and I was restrained from going into the front part of the house by a sudden wave of timidity. I stood a moment studying the black and white squares of linoleum about my feet. I observed now the bread crumbs in one spot and the grease splotch in another. I saw on the long table beneath the window a crockery bowl filled with water in which pieces of cake batter floated. A large spoon lay beside it on the table, and beneath the spoon a little puddle of water had settled on the white oil cloth. I was so sensible of the general mess in which the cook had left the kitchen and of the displeasure it would cause Mother when we should come to the kitchen to fix sandwiches tonight that I could not bear to think of being confined here any longer.

Yet I waited. If they didn't leave soon they'd certainly be late for the game. It had not yet begun to rain, so there was no question in my mind as to whether or not they would go. They would go, and they would go soon. I had merely to wait.

I waited. Still there was only the sound of their voices. I listened for the noise of footsteps. But there was none. As I waited with growing impatience I remarked how strange it was to hear a man's voice that was not Father's and a woman's voice that was not Mother's sounding on and on in our living room. Finally it seemed to be only Bill Evers' voice that I heard. Whenever Virginia Ann did speak, her voice had a sweetness about it that I had never heard and that almost brought tears to my eyes.

After a while my impatience grew naturally into resentment. But as the temptation to invade their privacy increased, so did my timidity.

I decided of a sudden that I was hungry.

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I went to the big white refrigerator and opened its door. It had never before been so completely stocked with edibles. And the cook in her haste to be away had apparently crammed every perishable in sight into the box without thought or care for arrangement or accessibility.

A long stalk of celery fell out on the floor at my feet. I stooped to pick it up, and as I rose I found myself looking directly in on the heap of dead quail.

At that moment I heard, or thought I heard, Virgina Ann's voice calling my name. I remained staring at the dead birds for a moment. They were stacked one upon the other in their bloody, feathery deadness in the same shelf with the respectable skeletons of the roast ducks. I resolved not to move until I had heard Virginia Ann calling again. Then I should Oh so gladly shut that door on the unwelcome sight of the birds and all that food for which I knew now I felt no hunger.

But when presently she called my name again, I could not make good my resolution. I stood holding the refrigerator door half open. She had called me, there was no doubt, but there was in her voice a note of caution. There was too evident a careful gauging of her volume. She plainly did not intend to disturb me if I were safely asleep or were safely out of earshot. And now that she had called me twice without answer, how could I ever answer? It was then that I determined to creep up the little flight of steps that went up from the kitchen (and joined the front stair on the landing) and to go and wait in my room. After I reached the small square bedroom with its overlarge pieces of mahogany furniture and metal bedstead I heard not another sound; and I had waited in the silence there until I thought I could endure it not another instant.

After Father had shut the front door behind Bill Evers, I heard Virginia Ann's footsteps on the stair. I hurried to the double bed that Brother and I shared and threw myself across it, but with my face toward the doorway. Presently she passed along the hallway, her hair dishevelled, her turban-like navy-blue hat in her hand. I watched her indistinct daytime shadow that followed her along the plain wall of the hallway one second after she was out of sight.

In a little while Uncle Jake and Brother came upstairs. Brother came in the room and pushed his cap back on his head as he usually did when he came in the front door downstairs. Uncle Jake stopped in the doorway. I raised myself on my elbows and pretended to yawn. Uncle Jake said to me, "Tonight's Scout Meeting night and we want

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you to go with us as our visitor." It was more command than invitation and I said:

"Yes, sir."

"You two get yourselves a nap," he said and as he moved away he pulled the door closed behind him.

Brother went to the closet and pulled out his Scout suit. I sat up on the side of the bed. Thursday night is Scout night, I said to myself. He and Uncle Jake would be going to Scout Meeting the same as on any other Thursday. This made it all quite real now. A sort of joy took possession of me. I saw that Brother, in his way, was quite as disturbed as I by what had happened. Father had already expressed his rage as he entered the house. Mother I could hear talking and weeping intermittently in Virginia Ann's bedroom. Uncle Jake would be off somewhere by himself looking out a window. I felt somehow that I could hear Aunt Grace saying to Virginia Ann, "You're a fool. You're a real little fool."

Brother was scrutinizing his uniform, brushing his shirt, loosening the knot of his kerchief. He would not look at me. Finally, without raising his eyes, he said, "You weren't asleep. Did you or didn't you go down and spy on them?" I made no answer. Now for some reason I felt myself blushing. I had no mind to answer him, I cared not whether he thought I had crept down the steps and spied on them or had remained in our room sleeping. Though I had not done so, I felt momentarily that I had. I could hardly remember whether I had or had not. But that was no matter. Actually I seemed to have forgotten Virginia Ann and Bill Evers. I was concerned only with Brother's eagerness to get into his uniform and be gone to the Boy Scout Meeting. For I saw what he was trying to interest himself in the meeting that was still several hours off. I saw that he was sufficiently disturbed to be trying to interest himself in other things. He hung his khaki trousers and shirt on a chair and began to move toward the bed. When he had lain down beside me he said, "Well, they were only necking, but they sure were *at* it." It had not occurred to me to imagine what they might have been doing, for I'd not have known exactly how to imagine it.

When Uncle Jake woke us he was dressed in his khaki Scout clothes. It was dark outside, and he had turned on the light and gone back into the hall to bring in a tray of sandwiches and two glasses of milk. Brother dressed himself in his khakis, and we ate.

Brother kept trying to make Uncle Jake talk about things per-

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taining to the Scouts. The only thing Uncle Jake said was, "If you'll apply yourself you'll be the first Eagle in our troop."

"I'm going to," Brother said. "I'm going to if it takes every single afternoon of the week." He was still trying to think of "other things," I reflected.

When we went downstairs we found Mother and Father back in the sitting room playing Casino. Virginia Ann was looking on. Father was winning and he pretended to be very proud and boastful of his score. He called us around to look at his hand and observe how cleverly he played it. But when he had called, "Cards," and the last hand was played, Mother had much the larger stack and all but one of the spades. So now she derided him for his boasting. Father pretended to want to talk of other things now. "I believe," he said with feigned formality, "I say I believe, my dear wife, that you said you had a letter from your sister Grace yesterday. What did she say? Do tell me about it."

And Mother did commence to tell him all about the "nice, fat, long, happy" letter.

So we left the house amidst a new burst of conversation between Mother and Father, and I felt a sudden gladness that I was not going to be in the house tonight. It would have meant being there alone with Virginia Ann. For just as Mother and Father had not invited her or anyone else to join their game they would not really have allowed anyone to join their conversation.

On the way to the Scout Meeting, sitting in the front seat of the automobile between my uncle and my brother, I thought of the letter from my Aunt Grace. If she had been there that afternoon I knew that she would have said, "Virginia Ann, you're a real little fool." And I did not long to see her tonight, for she would have been singing in the kitchen and in the hall, full of the sort of cheer that was in the letter, the exaggerated sort of cheer she had shown the day she left for Birmingham.

The Scout Meeting was held in an unused servants' room above the garage of one of Uncle Jake's hunting friends. As we walked up the shadowy drive to the garage we could see the light already burning in the room upstairs, and several of the other Scouts were at the window. But when we came into sight just below the window I saw them leave the window hurriedly as though they were in school and the teacher was arriving.

We went into the garage and began to climb the steep, dark stair. When we were about half way to the top I suddenly reached forward and grasped Uncle Jake's hand. He held my hand firmly and led me

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to the top step. And I wondered what might have become of me tonight if it had not been for Uncle Jake.

Presently we entered the bright room and found all of the boys sitting erectly on straight wooden benches that lined three walls of the bare room.

"Good evening, Boys," Uncle Jake said. The sound of his voice sent a chill up my spine. I felt goosebumps on the backs of my hands. The light in the room was bare and sharp and sent a long blue-black shadow of Uncle Jake's figure against the wall.

The boys answered in a chorus of high tingly voices.

Then Uncle Jake directed me to sit down beside Brother on one of the benches, and he went to the table in the center of the room.

As my eyes moved automatically from one face to another of those boys seated on the benches I was aware that every single face was a familiar one. They were boys whom I had seen with Brother either at school or in Sunday School. Yet tonight in their Scout suits, they were total strangers. Whenever one of them met my gaze there was no communication between us. Rather, our eyes seemed to rub against each other in the cold room.

Though I was unable to follow the procedure of the meeting I did at first try to stand up and to raise my hand when the other boys did. And I even moved my lips when the oath was recited, feeling a kind of elevation by the lists of adjectives. But it was while I was watching Uncle Jake's lips pronounce the words "loyal, brave, trustworthy, clean, reverent" that it seemed that he too was becoming a stranger.

After that I made no effort to understand what was being done or said. I simply watched my kind and gentle Uncle as he became more and more another stranger to me, losing himself in the role of the eternal Scout Master. It was later, just before the meeting was over (when the plans for Saturday's hike were completed), that I braced myself with the palms of my hands flat on the seat beside me; and while my heart pounded so that I imagined those around me would hear or feel it I watched Uncle Jake as he stood by his table speaking to the Boy Scouts. I realized now that Father had been right. This was Uncle Jake fulfilling himself. And to fulfill ones self was to remove ones self somehow beyond the reach of my own understanding and affection. It seemed that the known Uncle Jake had moved out of his body just as Aunt Grace had moved out of hers when she sang and laughed and as the Mother and Father whose hands I liked to have placed gently on the top of my head left their

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bodies whenever they excluded all the world from their conversation.

To the exclusion of all the world Uncle Jake was now become a Scout Master. I felt myself deserted by the last human soul to whom I might turn. He, rather, had turned and hidden himself in something more serious than laughter and song and more relentless than even persistent, endless, trivial conversation with a chosen mate. He stood before us like a gigantic replica of all the little boys on the benches, half ridiculous and half frightening to me in his girlish khaki middy and with his trousers disappearing beneath heavy three-quarter length woolen socks. In that cold, bare, bright room he was saying that it was our great misfortune to have been born in these latter days when the morals and manners of the country had been corrupted, born in a time when we could see upon the members of our own families—upon our own sisters and brothers and uncles and aunts—the effects of our failure to cling to the teachings and ways of our forefathers. And he was saying that it was our duty and great privilege, as Boy Scouts, to preserve those honorable things which were left from the golden days when a race of noble gentlemen and gracious ladies inhabited the land of the South. He was saying that we must preserve them until one day we might stand with young men from all over the nation to demand a return to the old ways and the old teachings everywhere.

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Film Chronicle

THE CLOSE-UP OF LOVE

THE "OMINOUS ISOLATION" in which the "Moment of Love" is seen in our films is noted by Parker Tyler in *The Hollywood Hallucination.* He rebukes Hollywood for the "larger-than-lifeness" it grants the "Single Instance" of sex; rebukes it for "isolating desire from its crisis in action"; for never evaluating the Single Instance in terms of "its relation to a total society of acts and thoughts." Mr. Tyler's original observation is a brilliant one; but the rebuke he delivers could be turned against him. For he himself fails ever to read the significance of this hallucination in terms of its relation to any total vision of things, or to read the significance of such a total in terms of its relation to the public which so avidly submits to it. The Single Instance, he says, results from Hollywood's withdrawal "from the reality and complexity of human problems," and this withdrawal results from artistic anarchy. Here he comes to a stop. His Single Instance gleams for a moment, promising to signify much, but dims to this.

And yet it need not have dimmed if only he had known how to add up other observations which gleam fitfully throughout his book. He observes of Spade, hero of *The Maltese Falcon,* that he lacks "dynamic relation to . . . society," "cannot socialize his emotions, cannot throw himself into the . . . mystery of believing in values and participating in their crises." Not only Spade but the majority of Hollywood heroes lack a dynamic relation to society. That is why the Moment of Love has assumed this ominous isolation.

In a recent film, *The Clock,* two young lovers go through the nightmare of sensing about their marriage that it is empty of a certain meaning because celebrated in limbo. A couple of uprooted kids—a girl who has left home three years before to come to New York and get a job as a secretary, and a small town soldier with two days in New York before going overseas—meet by accident, fall in love, and decide to get married immediately. At the marriage bureau the cleaning women have taken over; turn off their vacuum cleaners briefly for the ceremony—which cannot be heard anyway, as an El roars by outside. In a cafeteria where the two go next, under the stare of a stranger at a nearby table, they inquire of each other are their parents still living, had they better write, and suddenly the girl begins to sob. When the boy says he guesses she

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isn't very happy to be married to him, she replies, "I guess I don't feel very married—it was so ugly!" Shortly after, passing a church in which the candles from another wedding still burn, the two shyly enter, and read over the service, hopefully. When she comes to the phrase, "in the face of this company," she gives him a little look. He cuts in stoutly to stress "matrimony . . . is an honourable estate." The underlining of these two phrases contains a hair-raising irony.

The makers of the film do not intend the irony. At the end of this scene the girl exclaims, "Oh Joe, I love you!" and supposedly now everything is all right; we cut to the two alone in their hotel room, and the isolation in which they love is no longer viewed as pathetic: the Moment of Love is larger-than-life again. For *The Clock* has not sketched the plight of these lovers to show it forth, but rather to outface it, to wish it away.

But artistic anarchy can possess, as Tyler himself remarks and forgets, the "compulsiveness and the interior meaning" symptomatic of dreams. And dreams made in Hollywood betray more than their makers. The "reality and complexity" they labored to annul is suffered as such by the public—or the public would not put down its money with such regularity. It is only because the Single Instance reads back to us the public that it is worth deciphering further, in *The Clock* and in four other popular films. It is relevant to examine in each the relation in which the lovers stand to society.

In *The Enchanted Cottage* the lovers are an aviator returned from the war disfigured, unable to take up his old role; and a girl so homely that she has never had the feeling of "belonging" in any group. In *To Have and Have Not* the man is an American living in Martinique in '40, who doesn't like Vichy but isn't going to be a sucker and risk his neck for Free France. The girl has left the States six months before, for unspecified adventures, and now is tired, would walk home if it weren't for all that water. In *None But The Lonely Heart* the man won't settle down and "take hold" as his mother begs, because he feels it would mean playing either hare or hound; he would rather be a "tramp of the universe." The girl is a divorcée, with a child, and an ex-husband who is still possessive. In *Murder, My Sweet* the man is a "private eye." One of the characters says of him she doesn't know why he involves himself, for he doesn't know what side he's on. He's out for money of course and when accused of murder he's out to clear his name, but in the long run he seems to feed on proving to himself that he's a tough guy, who can take being nowhere. The girl with whom he's really matched in the film is a free lance in her own deadly fashion. The younger girl, with whom the film pretends at the end to match him more romantically, is a stranger in her home, hating her step-mother. Though some of these characters recognize it and some do not, none can be said to have "dynamic relation" to family, community or cause.

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Throughout these films a nightmare imagery runs that deepens this sense of estrangement, of lines of communication severed. *The Clock* opens with the camera picking out the hero from a crowd in Penn station as he seeks his way through; he emerges upon the street, stares up at the skyscrapers and, looking seasick, hurries back in. *None But The Lonely Heart* opens with the hero emerging out of fog on a lonely avenue; he enters Westminster Abbey and stands before the tomb of the unknown warrior, gazing. A stranger remarks, "Might be my son." "Might be my old man," he answers, broodingly, and wanders off. *Murder, My Sweet* opens—as the hero in flashback begins to recount the events of film—with the camera moving out the window and down nightlit city streets: that day he had been trying to trace a lost person, but had not found him, had found out only how large a city it was. A public with which one is continually thrown but with which one has no live connection is a persistent image. In *The Clock,* in the cafeteria scene, between the glances of the lovers the stranger's stare intrudes. In *None But The Lonely Heart,* in the nightclub scene, the screen image of the lovers sitting together is dissected incessantly by shadows of dancing couples. In *The Clock,* as the two walk the streets they are jostled by the crowds, and on the subway platform a crowd unthinkingly separates them altogether. Both films, at moments of desperation for the lovers, cut in from the background the unrelated laughter of strangers.

At one point in *None But the Lonely Heart* where the two are having a lovers' quarrel on the street, a cop approaches and advises, "There are places for such things; best find one." But the feeling is: Where is such a place to be found? "The world I want can be small as this room, but I have to know it will be there the next day," the girl later pleads. Even songs casually inserted echo this sickness for home: "The sad and lonely ones . . . ," "Carry me back to San Francisco; bury my body there!" The visions are unreal. When the girl in *To Have and Have Not* talks of going home, it has little meaning, except that she is tired of wandering. Hollywood of course does give us faithfully, one on the heels of another, small town idylls that doggedly—a bit too doggedly? —spread before our eyes home sweet home; but in *The Clock* when the boy talks of returning to Mapleton after the war, and the girl asks why Mapleton, he looks a little vague. He even adds, quite wonderfully, "It's not that I don't want to see things." Sometimes what a character will clutch at to provide that sense of community he misses, stands one's hair on end, as when in *None But The Lonely Heart* the hero cries out that perhaps war is the one answer—in war he would be fighting side by side with others fighting for the same thing, brothers at last.

A world in which face answers face again, all the cries are for this; and for a "place" again for love. But if love can find no place in the world, then love has an answer: love will retire and make of itself its own world. The camera knows how to assist. In the closeup it draws its

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boundaries; and lest discord anywhere invade, it blurs the edges of the screen. Music too has its role. There is a wonderful instance in *The Clock* of the construction, on the spot, of love's world unto itself. The two lovers are standing at dusk in Riverside Park. He has just told her that he is to be shipped out. In the river beyond is the convoy that will take him. The two stand at a painful distance from each other. A stranger walks by with echoing step. She remarks upon how full always the city is of sound, even at night. And loud now we hear in the distance horns, subways, sirens. Then suddenly, out of nowhere, a sweet music springs up, and drowns out all these other sounds, and wraps the lovers round. They gaze at each other; they draw near; and the camera too draws near, effacing from the screen the river and the convoy. The music, mounting, delivers them into each others arms. Music has perhaps the supreme power to deliver Hollywood lovers into a world apart.

The entirety of *The Enchanted Cottage* is set within the framework of a musical composition. It is set, too, within the framework of a flashback, which is another favorite device for isolating love's world. And the moment of greatest happiness in the film, The Moment, is set within another flashback within this flashback, and within this it is set in a dream—it is as it were thrice, four times hidden away for safekeeping (like the giant's heart in ancient fairy tales, removed by him carefully from his own body and hidden within a duck, within a well, within a garden, within a castle.) The hero bends over his bride, who is still sleeping. Shhh, she whispers, don't wake me, I am dreaming such a sweet dream. He asks her to describe her dream, and she describes a fashionable wedding—the bride so pretty, the groom simply stunning, and all the wedding guests so very jealous. They, of course, are the happy couple.

It is relevant to recall, with reference to the vacuity of this Moment, conceived so very much in terms of the advertisements for Maybelline, or Arrow collars, or a particular toothpaste, Donald Duck in *The Three Caballeros* pursuing his visions of love, only to have them time after time fade emptily. Love's world unto itself is only an hallucination. Its empty fading is an apt nightmare. *The Enchanted Cottage* as a matter of fact features just such a fading, when the hero's mother visits and the spell is shattered: the sleek beauty love has bestowed on the two falls from them. (But the spell is restored before curtain time.) The makers of *None But The Lonely Heart* have an eye on the ultimate insubstantiality of such a world, and labor to be true to this, in the manner of real Art. But their rationale of just why it is insubstantial is extremely gauche. In the end they do not really know what it is they know. In the end they have to lay it all, mechanically, to the ex-husband: he will not allow the two to find happiness. In a film like *Murder, My Sweet* the characters themselves have a cynical eye on things; never kid them-

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selves that the Moment of Love will be there in the morning; just enjoy it while it's to be had. But the majority of films, of course, seek happy endings; and what they do is skilfully cut, just end the film before the Moment of Love can fade.

But they also resort to one other device, to sustain love's world a little longer—that is: to people this world, not simply with the two lovers, but with some semblance of a "company." The milk man in *The Clock,* the housekeeper and the blind musician in *The Enchanted Cottage*—these are conspirators, as it were. But *The Enchanted Cottage* outdoes itself: it even provides the semblance of an already existent company into which the two can be duly initiated. The enchanted cottage has always been rented exclusively to honey-mooners; the names of former couples are scratched on a certain window pane. Our two lovers are worried, since at the very start their marriage was a marriage of convenience, lest "They" will not accept them into their company. (They of course do.)

In *The Clock* the lovers even, pathetically, invoke God as a conspirator. The morning the boy must leave, the girl says to him (in effect): "You will come back. I know it. Because whoever is doing the arranging for us, has arranged things very nicely so far." In *None But The Lonely Heart,* as remarked, the ex-husband is really seen as the One who does the arranging, who says yes or no. The lovers appeal to him, too. But his heart is not touched. "If it's love you want," he tells the two, "go to the movies; I don't believe in it." Yes, hearts must be touched, if the magic is to hold. "The places of the world are empty," Ike declares, "and the human heart is everything." Here is, indeed, the final significance of Tyler's ominously isolated Moment of Love: when the places of the world are felt as empty, then the heart has to be everything, unto itself.

BARBARA DEMING

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Books

TESTAMENT OF A HOMELESS RADICAL

THE YOGI AND THE COMMISSAR. *By Arthur Koestler. Macmillan.* $2.75.

IT IS above all the quality of relevance in Arthur Koestler which makes for the lively interest in him. This quality is not to be equated with the merely topical or timely. What enters into it, chiefly, is something far more difficult to capture—a sense of the present in its essence, a sense of contemporaneity at once compelling and discriminating. It is precisely for lack of this quality that most current writing is so dull and depressing, putting our intelligence to sleep with its fatal immersion in backward problems; and where the problems are politically not backward, it is usually the approach that makes them so (*e.g.*, Harold Laski, Max Lerner and other spokesmen of official, comfortably situated Leftism).

Koestler, on the other hand, has taken hold with dramatic force of a large historical theme. He is both the poet and ideologue of the homeless radical, and his unflagging analysis of this significant latter-day type—of his dilemma and pathos—has a tonic value compared to which the "positive contributions" featured in the liberal press seem puerile and inane. Nothing is ultimately so enervating as unreal positiveness, whether it takes the form of the ultra-leftist's faith in the imminence of the ideal revolution or the liberal's acceptance of the Soviet myth in accordance with all the precepts of "wave of the future" romanticism. Koestler, despite certain bad slips in the past, is one of the very few writers of the Left not intimidated by the demand for easy affirmations. Like Kierkegaard's "subjective existing thinker," he understands the function of ideas that help "to keep the wound of the negative open."

His prose, on the whole adequate to his theme, combines the sensibility of politics with that of literature in what might be described as a psycho-political style. Admirable, too, is his capacity to invent new terms and to order his thought in pithy formulations that sum up an entire period or the experience of an entire generation. His verbal sense is not unlike Trotsky's; the writing of both is distinguished by epigrammatic brilliance. But Koestler is apt to sacrifice precision for the sake of startling effects or dramatic finish. He is altogether open to the temptation that besets the littérateur of letting the phrase go beyond the content. His language is occasionally too showy for comfort; and an element of the meretricious is to be detected in his all too facile use of dashingly advanced metaphors and analogies drawn from the natural sciences

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and from the tantalizing vocabularies of the newer psychology. As a novelist he impresses me as being an expert, perhaps even inspired, manipulator of journalistic quantities. Neither *Darkness at Noon* nor *Arrival and Departure* has that fictional density and integral control of experience by which we know the true artist in the narrative medium. The characters that appear in these novels are not people on their own account but efficient mouthpieces. Yet even so we should be grateful for their existence, for they represent the discords of our time in a manner that is interesting, suggestive, almost lifelike and always pertinent.

In the essay on Richard Hillary, Koestler indirectly touches on his own status as a literary figure. Now that the era of the bourgeois novel is drawing to a close, he remarks, a new type of writer seems "to take over from the cultured middle-class humanist: airmen, revolutionaries, adventurers, men who live the dangerous life; with a new operative technique of observation, a curious alfresco introspection and an even more curious trend of contemplation, even mysticism, born in the dead centre of the hurricane." As examples he cites Silone, Malraux, Traven, St. Exupéry and others. Koestler is best understood, of course, in relation to such figures, Silone and Malraux in particular. By no means their equal as a novelist, he strikes one as more astute and trustworthy as an analyst of ideas in their bearing on politics. One cannot imagine his being so taken in by the rhetoric of the People's Front as to produce a novel of such illusory political meaning as Malraux's *Man's Hope;* nor, despite certain waverings toward the new religiosity, has he ever gone as far in that direction as Silone did in his last novel.

The political pieces in this collection are the most effective. Especially fine are the three essays on Soviet Russia, which constitute a devastating exposure of the Soviet myth. (If only the myth-addicts would read them!) The title-piece of the book appears to be of small consequence insofar as its key-terms, Yogi and Commissar, merely describe the polarization of belief between the concepts of "Change from Without" and "Change from Within"; and in another sense these terms come to little more than a rather sensational re-statement of the old *divertissement* of the psychologists that divided all of us into introverts and extroverts. But if not meaningful in the way of uncovering a permanent human contradiction, these terms do have meaning in their application to present-day realities. For it is the vileness of what Koestler calls "Commissar-ethics," whether of the Fascist or Stalinist variety, that has created the historical situation determining the movement of so many intellectuals to the ultra-violet pole of the Yogi. (The Yogis in our midst are continually gaining prestige and new recruits, with sorry results, however, so far as creative ideas are concerned. Auden, for instance, neglecting his splendid gifts as satirist and observer of the external world, has gone to school to Kierkegaard and Barth only to emerge as an exponent of academic anxiety. Marx saw in the spirit of spiritless

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conditions the social essence of religion, and it may well be said that except for this sentiment of wretchedness the present appeal of supernaturalism has quite literally no other objective content.) It is worth noting that Koestler, who in *Arrival and Departure* summarily announced that "a new god is about to be born," has now changed his course somewhat, refusing to join the "exotic hermitage fit for Yogi exercises." "Neither the saint nor the revolutionary can save us; only a synthesis of the two," he concludes. This is perhaps good enough as an abstract formula, but it tells us next to nothing about the possibilities of realizing any such synthesis in the world as we know it.

In the essay entitled "The Intelligentsia" I appreciated most the contrast drawn between the historical roles of the Russian and Western intellectuals. In the intellectuals Koestler sees a social group driven by "an aspiration to independent thought"—a group now declining in all countries, debilitated by its political experiences and gradually penned in by the growing power of the State.—"Thus the intelligentsia, once the vanguard of the ascending bourgeoisie, becomes the lumpen-bourgeoisie in the age of its decay." This last seems particularly applicable to America. Not so long ago a good many of our intellectuals were economically no better off than lumpen-proletarians, a position which allowed them to assume attitudes of bohemian intransigeance toward society, whereas of late, what with war-prosperity and the proliferation of government jobs which began even earlier, with the New Deal, the once impoverished intellectuals have been converted almost to a man into lumpen-bourgeois. And government-employees, occupied as they are with the bureaucratic struggle for status and revenue, are notoriously feeble in their aspirations to independent thought.

When it comes, however, to Koestler's imputation of neuroticism to the intelligentsia as a group, one cannot agree with him quite so easily. In his view neuroticism is the "professional disease" of the intellectuals because of the pathological pattern produced by the hostile pressure of society. Koestler may be right, but I cannot say that I found his argument convincing. Precise etiological data are missing; without a controlled Freudian analysis the Freudian assumptions hang in the air; and in general the kind of observation that Koestler brings to bear is literary rather than scientific. It seems to me that he assimilates the intellectuals far too readily to the artist-types among them, who are after all but a minority within a minority. The personality-structure of the artist is quite different from that of most members of the intelligentsia, whose connection is with the more technical and less estranged forms of culture and who are not noted in any special way for the vulnerability, complication or perversity of their subjective life.

Equally schematic, to my mind, are the arguments advanced in some of the essays that deal directly with literature. In "The French 'Flu," while attacking our tendency to make too much of French literary cul-

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ture, Koestler is less than fair to Gide; and, keeping in mind the recent news from Paris of the accomplishments of French writers, one is disposed to admire more than ever the French genius for literature. In "The Novelist's Temptations" Koestler's point is that to function properly the novelist must possess "an all-embracing knowledge of the essential currents and facts (including statistics), of the ideas and theories (including the natural sciences) of his time." The saving proviso is that "this knowledge is not for actual use. . . . It is for use by implication." Even with the proviso, however, this appears to be an excessively rationalistic view of the literary process. Development and retrogression in the novel can hardly be plotted on so simple a graph. The movements of the imagination are tortuous and obscure; great works of art have often been created by compulsive and extremely one-sided talents (consider Franz Kafka). The element of knowledge in imaginative literature is easily overestimated. What is important in writing as in art generally is the quality of relevance—a quality perhaps synonymous with that "sense of modernity" which Baudelaire stressed so frequently and for which he praised artists like Courbet and Manet. This modernity can take various and contradictory forms, some of them unrecognizable to those above all concerned with being up to date. Kafka, for instance, is deeply modern not because the latest acquisitions of the social and natural sciences are embodied in his fiction but because it is reverberant with the feelings of loss and alienation characteristic of modern man. Being *au courant* with the latest facts and theories is desirable in itself and can certainly do the novelist a lot of good. There is no need, however, to elevate such useful knowledge to a pre-requisite of the creative life.

In the several pieces on Soviet Russia Koestler carries through a powerful polemic against the myth-addicts in our midst, who have by now accumulated sufficient numbers and influence to serve as a Fifth Column aiding and abetting Stalin's foreign policy of duplicity and aggression. Koestler strikes at the very foundations of the myth by demonstrating that "economically the Soviet Union represents State Capitalism. The State owns the means of production and controls the production and distribution of goods. The distinction between State Capitalism and State Socialism is from the economist's point of view meaningless. The difference between the two lies in the political and social structure of the country, in the question 'The State controls everything, but who controls the State?' " This is exactly the question that the apologists for Stalinism never attempt to answer, for their entire case would collapse if they once ventured to examine from a principled point of view the real nature of Soviet economy and the political superstructure which is supports. They invariably assume precisely what they must prove: that Russia is a socialist country, that between 1917 and 1945 nothing has essentially changed. By refusing to examine fundamentals they can continue

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justifying indefinitely Stalinist methods on the ground that all is well because the latent purpose is anti-fascist and socialist. But the fact is, as Koestler puts it, that "the Leftist contention that Soviet economy (*i.e.*, nationalization) is socialist is as spurious as the Rightist contention that state-controls and planning are Fascism." We are now paying the price for the fetishism of economy promoted by the Marxist movement, as it is the myth-addicts who now base everything on the abolition of capitalist property in Russia. To this we should reply with Koestler that "Russia may of course at some distant date go socialist—so may Portugal and the United States. But all we can say at present is that the U.S.S.R., despite her nationalized economy, is no nearer to this aim than, for instance, New Zealand or even Great Britain." The Stalinized liberals, no less than the orthodox Trotskyites, prefer Russia to the Western democracies. Actually there is no basis for this preference. For if it is true that it will take nothing less than a revolution before the West can go socialist, so it is true that it will take another revolution to bring socialism to Russia. The Soviet bureaucracy will no more surrender peacefully than the old ruling classes of the West. On the contrary, the Soviet bureaucracy, greedy and brutal, freshly recruited from parvenu types and devoid of all moral norms, will probably fight harder for its privileges than the historically used up bourgeoisie of such countries as Italy, France and England. Hence the conclusion is inescapable that the democratic institutions of the West are just as much worth defending, despite their subservience to bourgeois aims, as nationalized property in Russia against a restoration of capitalism. The test of socialism is not unilateral: it cannot be confined to economic arrangements; the social, political and ethical conditions must be tested with equal seriousness. On no account can we abandon the original definition of socialism. Socialism is above all libertarian. Socialism is incompatible with an hierarchical organization of society. Socialism is freedom, democracy and equality.

PHILIP RAHV

INSPIRED, HALF-EDUCATED, PURITAN AND FEMININE

BOLTS OF MELODY. *By Emily Dickinson. Harper & Bros.* $3.00.

THOUGH MOST great poets write some bad poetry, few great poets have written as much bad poetry as Emily Dickinson. This volume of hitherto unpublished poems contains her characteristic mixture of wit, insight, coyness, intolerable punning, and doggerel. From stanza to stanza and from verse to verse, the only certainty is that genuine per-

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ception and extraordinary phrasing may be succeeded by some makeshift notation or excruciating rhyme:

Day knocked, and we must part.
Neither was strongest now;
He strove, and I strove too.
We didn't do it though!

Writing like this may be explained by the fact that Emily Dickinson did not write for publication; and we have every reason to suppose that the author of some of these poems would not have permitted many of the others to be printed. And midway between her successes and her failures are the poems she might have attempted to rewrite, of which the following stanza is representative:

Power is a familiar growth,
Not foreign, not to be,
Beside us like a bland abyss
In every company;

where the second line is incoherent and must be construed by uncertain guesswork.

However, Emily Dickinson's virtues and defects, though they issue in originality, are not unique, and much in her work illustrates the peculiar fate of the author in America. Like Emerson, she never quite mastered poetic form, and her successes in versification resemble fine weather, and good luck. Like Melville and like Hart Crane, she was intoxicated with language, and abused it as well as used it with genius. Like Hawthorne, she lived in a self-imposed exile, laboring with private obsessions which are certainly in back of the impenetrability of some of her poems. And it is the special preoccupation with vocabulary, the words used to express an intuition with perfect economy and the misused words, which should remind the reader of how often American literature has been the playground of half-educated inspired human beings when it has not been dominated by genteel, pedantic and correct mediocrities. Emily Dickinson was half-educated in a way which differs a good deal from the kind of half-education Hart Crane received. Her one effort to connect herself with a living literary tradition was greeted with condescension and little understanding, while Crane might be said to have had, in the abstract at least, a greater opportunity to relate himself to a disciplined literary tradition. But the result in poetry is very much the same.

The fact, (which has not, so far as I know, been noted) that much of the surface of her writing, and especially the quality of her wit, resembles the prose of Alice James (who admired her poems when they first appeared) suggests some common basis in New England life. And we may make out the boundary lines of this common basis when we remember how often in Emily Dickinson's poems renunciation is the motive which is celebrated and the motive which diminishes all others.

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So too withdrawal and seclusion are aspects of the point of view from which she looks at the world. In the foreground are nature and death; in the background is the family circle where the overwhelming papa and the gifted brother have presided; general ideas are fragments of a theology which lives only as a morality of propriety and rejection. And thus what we have in this poetry is the Puritan sensibility, in a feminine rôle, isolated from the life of its time, removed from the way of life which engendered it, and profoundly involved like a fire in consuming itself.

JOSEPH HANNELE GOLDSMITH

DILTHEY AS PHILOSOPHER AND HISTORIAN

WILHELM DILTHEY: AN INTRODUCTION. *By H. A. Hodges. Oxford University Press.* $3.50.

DILTHEY'S LIFE stretched through the entire nineteenth century. When he was born in 1833, the German eighteenth century had just come to an end with the death of Hegel and Goethe; when he died in 1911, the European nineteenth century had three more years to live. These biographical data remain essential for the evaluation of the man and his work. For although Dilthey in many respects represented the best aspects of the "spirit of his age," he never went beyond it and he never left the narrow framework of academic life. He had nothing to do with the great rebels of and against the nineteenth century, and his antipathy to Nietzsche was anything but a matter of "temperament" (Hodges). The great hatred of men like Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche for mere contemplation as the supreme content of intellectual life must have shocked and horrified Dilthey whose ruling passion was very much like the passion of the famous collectors of the nineteenth century although he did not collect objects. His collection was a more precious and more refined one; it was a collection of inner experiences, (*Erlebnisse*) whose main concern was to present a complete exhibition of "life itself."

Dilthey has been best known for his attempt to lay the foundations of the human studies (*Geisteswissenschaft*) as different and even opposed to the methods of natural science. History in which all other branches of the humanities are comprehended presupposes a secure method of "hermeneutics," the establishment of a science and art of interpretation. At the core of historical science as of history itself lies for him the problem of understanding. He had planned (and never achieved) a Critique of Historical Reason; the main function of this reason was man's capacity to understand. The objects of the understanding reason are the expression of *Erlebnisse* ("lived experience" in Hodges' translation), as they are presented in history and culture,

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because Life expresses and "objectifies" itself. History becomes for Dilthey a series of objectified experiences which we can understand insofar as we can "re-live" (*nacherleben,* Hodges' translation) them. Understanding, interpretation, hermeneutics are the art of deciphering signs of expression.

The main point about this art of reproduction is that it enables one to share in experiences that are ordinarily beyond the bounds of an individual life and a specific historical time. "Dilthey instances the effect of his own study of Luther and the Reformation in enabling him at least to understand a religious experience of a depth and intensity such as in his own person he was not capable of sharing." (Hodges) It is this somehow parasitical attitude to life which makes Dilthey's general reflections on history so highly characteristic for the spirit of the nineteenth century, and it is quite in accordance with this spirit that Dilthey found the highest type of man in the artist. For the general genius-worship of his time was actually based on the conviction that only the artist who possesses the capacity of expressing his "lived experiences" is truly "alive," a conviction which Dilthey shared and from which he concluded that if the Gods have refused a man the necessary talents his second-best chance to become "alive" is to decipher "expressions," thus partaking in the experiences of others. In Dilthey's concept, the historian becomes a kind of an artist who has missed his calling.

The artist as the prototype of man is an old topic of philosophy. The difference, however, between the older concepts and the nineteenth century genius-worship that started with German romanticism is marked. For the former the artist was the supreme guarantee of man's creative capacities, whereas romanticism already saw in art only the expression of experiences and in the artist only a human being with more and more interesting experiences. In Germany, Schleiermacher was the first to detect in the "lived experiences" the central interest of man and he transformed,accordingly, religion into religiosity, faith into religious sentiments and the "reality of God" into the feeling of dependence. It is by no means accidental that Dilthey's greatest admiration went to Schleiermacher and that one of his most elaborate and best-known works was devoted to his biography.

It is a matter of course that insofar as this hunger for life and lived experiences of the nineteenth century was genuine, the passion for understanding, for "re-living" has produced some great achievements. These, however, do not belong to the realm of philosophy, and the most serious shortcoming of Hodges' introduction to the work of Dilthey (the first book in English to deal with his work) is that he places the main accent on Dilthey the philosopher and leaves Dilthey the historian who was a far more important man almost entirely out of his picture. For Dilthey's *Interpretation and Analysis of Man in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century* and his *Experience and Poetry* (*Erlebnis und Dich-*

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tung) are indeed standard works of the history of ideas—both of which are omitted from the introductory text as well as from the Selected Passages, which, on the other hand, contain a badly organized choice of fragmentary general ideas and reflections which appear today rather antiquated.

A similar error in judgment seems to be that Hodges highly overrates Dilthey's influence on modern existential philosophers. He calls Karl Jaspers a disciple of Dilthey and quotes in support of this thesis the *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*. As far as I can find out, Jaspers quotes Dilthey but once among many other authors as one of his historical sources. It may have been easier to prove an influence on Heidegger (whom Hodges does not name), for Heidegger expressly states (in *Sein und Zeit*) that his treatment of the problem of history has grown out of an interpretation of Dilthey's work, although even in this case a closer examination shows that it was rather York von Wartenburg's letters to Dilthey than Dilthey himself which influenced Heidegger's analysis.

The literature on Dilthey in Germany is tremendous and Hodges' bibliography is a service to all students. From this literature, the few pages which Hofmannsthal wrote on the occasion of Dilthey's death convey best, in their carefully balanced briefness, the greatness of comprehension that was the hallmark of Dilthey's contemplation. Dilthey's tremendous erudition was something more than extensive knowledge and Hofmannsthal honors him rightly when he evokes the lines of Goethe's *Lynkeus-lied*:

Er schaut in die Ferne,
er sieht in die Naeh',
den Mond und die Sterne,
den Wald und das Reh.

HANNAH ARENDT

ARTIST AND SPOKESMAN

BLACK BOY. *By Richard Wright. Harper.* $2.50.

TO BE A Negro in America is a full-time job. In the Negro artist we have a striking demonstration of this tragic dilemma. The artist in him is almost always in conflict with the more pressing demands of his situation as a member of a minority group. The Negro writer's every word has an importance beyond its mere literary effect; behind each work of art there are the black millions for whom it must speak and the hostile whites who cannot be treated as adults, who are, possibly, always on the lookout for Negro corroboration of white prejudices. Functioning as an individual artist has become almost impossible and this, no doubt,

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accounts for the appalling naiveté of such writers as Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen. In Richard Wright there has been from the first the problem of his double duty as a creative artist and spokesman for America's twelve million Negroes. The fact that he, more than any other artist of his race, has been able to combine both obligations is proof of his power and singularity. And yet even Richard Wright suffers from the omnipresent censor, the endless need to explain and to underline truths already implicit in his subjects.

In *Native Son* the artist-spokesman predicament was most acute. With a daring that brought the book widespread attention, Wright created Bigger Thomas, a personality of almost legendary vigor. Where the sympathetic white writers felt compelled to deal only with lovable, suffering Negroes, Richard Wright tackled the problem of a full human being subject to fantastic terrors and desires. Every literary justification for Bigger Thomas' actions was implicit in all we knew of his temperament, his fatal conditioning, his ability to respond. But at the end of the book Wright began to hear voices: the voice of both black and white America, suggesting all might be misunderstood. As a result we had the degeneration of the artist into the pamphleteer who forced himself to deny his gifts in order to meet the demands of the most uncomprehending. His novellas, also, are reduced by the injection of the final Forward, March! theme. Richard Wright's early work was truly a prey to official, unimaginative Communist Party politics—and, of course, to the American distrust of the Negro.

In *Black Boy* the early crudities have been conquered to a large extent. We have a picture of Wright himself that can hardly fail to send a shudder of horror over those who feel that the Negro must be presented as a mere doll with a capacity for suffering. In some ways it is a catalogue of all the neurotic compulsions the human being can endure. We have, among other things, pyromania, childhood drunkenness, anal eroticism, somnambulism and several incidents that threaten to end in family killings. This book, like most of Wright's work, is written with a courageous and stubborn kind of integrity. (It goes without saying that power and skill do not necessarily make a book a best-seller. A psychologist, interested in the subtleties of race relations, might find in the popularity of this "meanest" of the Negro writers some interesting material on the American psyche.)

To be sure there are unsuccessful aspects of *Black Boy*: mainly the use of stereotyped, pseudo-poetry to tie up his destitute, tragic childhood with the broader benevolences of the nature world in which it took place. On the whole, however, *Black Boy* is an admirable and interesting achievement which in dispensing with facile and superfluous interpretation shows Richard Wright has come to a genuine belief in literature. One can be deeply thankful that he has survived *The Daily Worker*.

ELIZABETH HARDWICK

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A DISCIPLE'S PICTURE OF FREUD

FREUD, MASTER AND FRIEND. *By Hanns Sachs. Harvard University Press.* $2.50.

THE AUTHOR of this work is a practising psychoanalyst who was closely associated with Freud for thirty years, most notably from 1909 to 1918. The book is written in an admittedly subjective vein. Sachs speaks of it as a part of his own autobiography inasmuch as the events and ideas which it records are so intimately bound up with the most significant part of his own life. It is also in another sense subjective—the sense of a personal duty which the author performs as the sole survivor from a group of half a dozen early associates of Freud, including Rank, Abraham, Eitington, Jones and Ferenczi, who rather consistently maintained a harmonious relationship with the father of psychoanalysis—as opposed to such early dissenters as Adler, Stekel and Jung.

The author takes pains to admit his subjective approach—perhaps even to extol it. "I can hardly be expected to be objective," he writes. "I have never thought of Freud as an 'object' and I am not going to start to do it now. Does this mean the condemnation in advance of what I am going to tell as unreliable stuff made up by an uncritical enthusiast? Holy Boswell, come to my assistance! You were not ashamed to tell your readers and everyone else who wanted to hear it (and a great many who did not) that you 'idolized' Dr. Samuel Johnson." It would be difficult to exceed the degree of identification with the father of psychoanalysis which this loyal son experienced. Even the characterization "Master and Friend" seems tame in the setting of such statements as: "My first opening of the *Traumdeutung* (*Interpretation of Dreams*) was the moment of destiny for me—like meeting the 'femme fatale,' only with a decidedly more favorable result. Up to that time I had been a young man who was supposedly studying law but not living up to the supposition—a type common enough among the middle class in Vienna at the turn of the century. When I had finished the book, I had found the one thing worth while for me to live for; many years later I discovered that it was also the only thing I could live by." In keeping with this orientation Sachs shows repeatedly how his life was dominated by what Freud was, thought and did. Only once, he is concerned to show, did he give Freud cause for definite disapproval. "Only once in thirty-five years! That is not such a bad record."

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that the treatment of Freud in these pages has at times a tone of special pleading. In an early chapter entitled "Vienna" Sachs gives a socio-psychological picture of that much romanticized city—an analysis intended above all to destroy the illusion that Freud was identified in any way with the spirit of the place in which he lived and worked for most of his long life. While Vienna represented—to put it mildly—"insincerity without hypocrisy,"

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Freud was, Sachs says, almost unduly anxious about appearing insincere or hypocritical. Having devoted his life to unveiling what others habitually repress, the spirit of Vienna was uncongenial to him. And it is entirely fallacious to assume, as some uninformed persons have done, that the moral freedom of Vienna contributed in some way to the making of psychoanalysis. Victorian England would obviously have been more challenging in that respect to the vision of the psychologist. Freud was himself an almost drab personality with no special passion or eccentricity—nothing exciting or thrilling or sensational in his private life.

Sachs is similarly concerned to free Freud from the charge of "tyrannical schoolmaster." Admitting that the long series of schisms—with Adler and Jung, for example—must have had something in common, he sets out to analyze the situation. There were, to be sure, jealousies and overweening ambitions among the early associates of Freud, but Freud kept aloof from such bickerings. It was his horror of power and his distrust of possessing it, rather than any need for it, which caused the series of ruptures between him and his at first loyal sons. He more than once made the mistake of creating among his followers a "crown prince" without somehow realizing that the one most likely to turn against the king is the next in succession. The paradox that the man who understood unconscious motivation so well should have repeatedly overlooked this danger is admitted by Sachs but he neglects further to analyze either this surprising blindness or the avoidance of power linked with it. The question remains whether here again, as in the case of the Viennese milieu, a reaction-formation was at work. Was Freud possibly attempting to correct by bending over backward the strong need for power which he recognized in himself and which, in the end, with the return of the repressed led inevitably at the critical moment to the undoing of all his generous efforts? Sachs' failure to go beyond the surface of rationalization in his analysis of the situation again suggests the possibility of selective insight.

When Sachs finally does bring himself to the discussion of Freud's personality in psychoanalytic terms, one might reasonably expect to find a change in tone. The author begins by emphasizing his constant feeling that Freud was somehow *different*, "not the same clay." When he attempts to specify in what the difference lay or, in other words, to depict the essential greatness of Freud, the following traits are singled out: dislike of flattery and ostentation in any form, emotional undemonstrativeness, intellectual independence, refusal to accept anything on authority and excessive pride. Obstinacy and severity are thought of as closely related to these more positive characteristics and the pride is definitely interpreted as "magnificent." The psychoanalytic portion of the chapter is an attempt to explain the central place which the dualistic concept, as Sachs expresses it, seemed to play in Freud's thinking. Referring especially to the dreams reported in Freud's largely autobiographical book

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on this general subject, Sachs makes out a case for a strongly ambivalent attitude toward the father which served to emphasize dualism in Freud's orientation to the world. In this fashion the author, for a few pages at least, drops his avowed intention of not treating Freud as an object: he actually attempts to analyze him. But the result is thin. The analysis may explain some of the pride as striving to disprove the father's pessimistic prophecy of the son's future. It may explain Freud's refusal to accept anything on authority and even his rebellious courage. But for so distinguished a mind as Freud's much still seems to have been left unclarified—much that would probably be more illuminating if known. It seems significant in this connection that the chapter is uniquely peppered with quotations from the poets, as if the author were girding his loins with some special armor to help him in an unequal contest.

Having said these possibly unkind words about the book, it remains to consider the positive contribution which it unquestionably makes. For despite the special pleading already noted, one finds, particularly on rereading, many objective facts which the thirty years of association produced and which are set down in these pages as valuable biographical material. One learns a considerable amount about Freud's habitual way of life—the rooms in which he lived while in Vienna and in his last days in England; something about the members of his family circle, particularly his wife and her sister, and his lively mother; his daily routine of Herculean labor and his indefatigable prowess, whether in mental or physical activities; his diversions, such as the regular Saturday night card game, and the nature and locale of his summer vacations. Freud's habit of writing nearly everything in longhand, whether articles and books or letters, provides interesting information. His lack of feeling for music, his love of orchids, his excessive cigar-smoking, and his passion for collecting antique figurines add to our picture of the man. His literary interest in such writers as Goethe, Dostoevsky and Shakespeare are touched upon. His way of illustrating a point by a homely anecdote—a habit which more than one psychoanalyst seems to have taken over or have come by otherwise for some undisclosed reason—is well exemplified. Thus, to illustrate the paradox that major adversities are sometimes mastered by individuals who may be completely shattered by seeming trivialities, Freud told of the man who on a wager was quite capable of eating fecal matter successfully until he found himself at last inhibited—by discovering a hair in it! His gift for ironical wit is likewise portrayed as when, for instance, in answer to the Office of Internal Revenue, which had expressed some doubt about the correctness of his declaration because, in its opinion, he had had so many foreign patients who pay high fees, he said: "I note with pleasure this first official recognition which my work has found in Austria."

From the strictly biographical point of view where, as already said, the book seems to make its most significant contribution, the final pages,

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describing Freud's later years, are by far the best. The story of his fortitude in the face of repeated operations for cancer of the mouth during the final decade of his life is tragic. The description of the escape to England and Freud's last days there ends the account.

This biography affords a picture of Freud the everyday man which only those who knew him by personal contact over a long period could provide. Even the special pleading can be penetrated if the reader is so inclined. It is not, after all, necessary to agree with the author in his conclusions, and the frankness—one might almost say the naivete—with which the book is written makes one less reticent about taking such a discriminative approach. Until, therefore, the definitive biography which Sachs promises from the hands of Freud's daughter Anna is available, the present little book, along with the similar fragmentary sources that as yet exist, will have to suffice. Anna Freud will, one hopes, have less to defend and will, one may be confident, have more to reveal.

SAUL ROSENZWEIG

OUR PERSON OUR WORLD

THE WINTER SEA. *By Allen Tate. The Cummington Press.* $5.00 & $10.00.
POEMS, NEW AND SELECTED. *By Richard Eberhart. The Poets of the Year. New Directions.* $1.00
A POET'S YOUTH. *By Allan Dowling. The Wanderer Press.* $2.50.
CUT IS THE BRANCH. *By Charles E. Butler. Yale University Press.* $2.00.
THIRTY POEMS. *By Thomas Merton. The Poets of the Year. New Directions.* $1.00.
A MASQUE OF REASON. *By Robert Frost. Henry Holt & Co.* $2.00.
A WORLD WITHIN A WAR. *By Herbert Read. Harcourt, Brace & Co.* $2.00.

REVIEWERS, THE glib order, are likely to attribute the works of most of our present-day poets to the works of three or four others. I am not speaking of serious literary critics, the few and far-between, but of those who feel no responsibility to inquire into far-flung aboriginal sources, those who are never so happy as when they are pigeonholing works which have, in reality, little relationship with Auden, Yeats, Hopkins, Eliot, the most convenient points of reference, as if they were mariners' stars. Great injustice has been done to modern poetry in the hands of such reviewers. The intellectual layman must see it depicted constantly as a static quantity. My argument is that more reviewers are long-haired than poets, more reviewers than poets inhabiting, in these days, the dusty attics of Grub Street. This has always been the case. Whatever mistakes I may make, I shall at least evade the equation of every poet with a few others who by the glamor of their reputations command a respect they are surely tired of.

Our age is devoid of one informing myth. Our poets may be con-

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cerned, however, with the death of myth and the imaginative result of a conception of world processes which, because depersonalized, is often held to be inimical to imagination. How the value-mongers tremble on their high thrones! The death cry of myth, so dear to the hearts of the value-mongers, is accompanied, however, by the birth cry of an art which integrates new world views, difficult only to those who would reject adventure, like anthropology, like geography from the world of art.

Our poets, like thinking men, are prone now to move in a realm of relativities, frictions, corrosive processes, without certitude, without an ideal of the Platonic demi-sphere of archetypes as over-arching the vast mistake of a perpetual fluctuation. Not all are mooning in rose gardens among marble statues. Empiricism, evolutionism, psychology, these important insights have not only shaken confidence in the logical structure of human reason as a source for the provision of an absolute truth, but have proved it largely erroneous. The Polynesian taboo is cousin germane to the Platonic archetype. The over-reality which was so lately a swan song becomes conspicuous, finally, by its absence from the modern context. For such relativists, the only absolute is that provided by a far from absolute man, a shady character. They can find no security in the mouthing of time-worn convictions. Did the Greeks really have a word for it? Our most distinguished poets are thrown, more and more, upon the resources, not of traditionary attitudes and despairs but of modern investigation, the physical whirlwind which is as old and older than the hills. The arid fact is that the more we comprehend the vast fluctuation of experience suggested by empiricism, the less likely it seems that we shall ever be able to reach, in our experience, the ultimate ground of being and becoming, or even a science of ultimates. All is trial and error. Each poet must seek, in his own hazardous way, as was always the case among the adventuresome, the integration of an experience which defies integration, since so many of the old signposts walk off lurchingly into the mist themselves. As science progresses, it describes, similarly, less and less of a tangible reality. But does this progress of science from elephant as elephant to elephant as light beams—roughly speaking—leave the poet with only the alternative of Mother Church's bosom or some such closed system of eternal dogma? There is a broad possibility that science may also have its symbolic uses, just like the old saints who ran after their heads after decapitation. Imagination does not cease.

Allen Tate's *The Winter Sea* is the work of a mature poet and one of singular complexity, forbidding only to the aggrieved fundamentalist. Tate, like the author of *Alice in Wonderland,* makes a fantasy of mathematics, of logic. He is not careless. *The Winter Sea* is worthy, on all scores, of our prolonged exploration and discovery. It does not exhaust itself, being something more than a personal document of birds noted and lovers met. Tate proposes, in fact, a complexus of the most extreme mystic and most extreme skeptic views, a double order con-

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spiring to be disorderly, the interesting fact that there may be men dwelling, symbolically, at the antipodes of each other. We pick this statement, it is true, out of the most inscrutable imagery. *The Winter Sea* is hauntingly difficult because of the diverse schemata of which it seems the inevitable, distinguished result, an awareness both of traditional idealism and that the discordant vision suggested by the complexities of modern thought cannot be dismissed as worthless trivialities. These, too, have their amazing consequence in thought and action. A thinker less astute than Tate could dismiss them, airily. Tate, a man of air, cannot. Tate's poems are, for all their seeming frustrated whimsicality, formal, the result of the most formal thinking. Each is like a rule or statement of relations as expressed in a formula or by symbols—crows or centaurs—and rigorous as good abstraction always is. The mind, from this point of view, may be made up of additions and negations, in endless play. A fact which William James noted. Because Tate is not only an intellectual poet but also emotional, in a high-charged atmosphere, his algebra gone wild may create new, the most amazing perspectives, to startle us out of our ordinary assumptions. He has read the old signposts from which our life has moved away, but he persists, at whatever cost, in his inquiry. What then? The fact of our knowledge of the originating power as ourselves does not change the fact that man would be embarrassed by the absence of his symbolic life, however unreal to all but ourselves, even ourselves transcendent. Our propensity for self-deception continues to play, like our angelology, an important, perhaps the most important role. Tate, the truth-seeker of no imperial truth possible or given, explores the richness of contraries and propositions which, each taken to be true, would nullify each other except for their continued presence as a subject of conflict.

Converse assumptions nullify not only Tate's search for certitude but that of other poets. There are oblique allusions to these—ghosts of Alexander Pope and other poets haunting the winter sea, et cetera—but for what purpose? Tate's triumph is to explode, at every glittering point, the euphemistic convention, the immoral maxim, the accepted falsehood. Certitude may be only an antipathy to the ideal of progress, from Tate's point of view. And by progress, I am speaking in terms of the voyage, not the goal, in terms of action, not of rest. There is a broad possibility, haunting to this poet as a marble statue to the poetaster, that the search is everything and not the object searched for, not the fixed attitude. Tate holds suspect even the most refined uses of language. Is every noun accompanied by its corresponding entity in space, its reality? Where is essence? Where is substance? Is centaur for Tate the time-worn, exalted image of super-reality, eliciting our vague agreement as a matter of convention, or is it merely a noun, a word to which there is no corresponding entity that we know of, like perhaps the word God? The centaur of Tate's cosmos, transhifting as that cosmos is, Dante plus an infinite

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variation, becomes also a hypothesis, an as-if real. No departments. We are familiar in the motion pictures with the abstraction of the little man who was not there—familiar with what is not. Tate employs such concepts. Note that the centaur whom Tate sees as he descends in winding hell, note that the project of the metempirical being is accompanied by a sadly empirical feature, the notched, amazing beard—and that this is the most macabre of all possible commentaries, being the most intimate to a man's daily existence. It suggests, in fact, no geographical barrier between terrestial and extra-terrestial phenomena, no possibility of our escape from the relative to the absolute. Heaven is a beard shaped like a notched arrow!

Tate has realized that there may be no perfection which does not include our imperfection. He is himself, let it be said, Janus-faced, double-headed, a splitter of flea's eyebrows like William Blake, for whom there is no certitude either of one world or that the world we live in is not limitless. The macrocosm was bad enough, but consider the microcosms, the many little worlds, and the falsities of our instruments of objective measurements. The infinitely small, the infinitely great! And, finally, once more a macabre item, that there is no sylvan door to a rational nature and that we rattle against the bole the thing that we lived for. Note that Tate's God is not merely dying but drying as well. Note his God as an immanent force not believed in. Note, too, his relegation of the commonsense world to the status of illusion per se. Our own disjunctions of intuitions provide no final truth. What over-all reality, differing from reality in its particular instances is there? Evidently, none. The equal laws burning in the sky alike for Balaam and for Balaam's ass can come into proximity only with the glassy-eyed dead, seemingly.

To Tate, as a crucial figure, I have devoted the majority of the space alloted. Richard Eberhart's *Poems* lack only the last boldness of language, for they are subtle. More significant than Eberhart's calm, his puffed-up, idealistic clouds, his nostalgia for certitude, is his realization of self as if the self itself were an exploded star, his realization of our material wars as our perversion of spirit, his recognition of our evil ideology as preceding our evil machinery, of man's uncreating creation, of the natural process which takes no cognizance of man's supernal hope and aspirations. Our old, mystical dream of returning to space is now realized in daily practice—what was our religion is now our long-range artillery, an impersonal force. Consciousness it is that blights us all. Of war in the animal sinews let us speak not, Eberhart writes, but of that war which preceded it, the beautiful disrelation of the spiritual. There is the true war, the everlasting, as we would have it! Conflicting systems, those we dreamed of, are now conjoined to operate to our despair. Truly, we are caught on the horns of a dilemma. Eberhart, a

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high subjectivist, engulfs all space in a sweeping vision, both Cartesian angel and Cartesian machine, both metaphysical plenitude and the physical void. He fears, of course, the space he celebrates. His war poems will have a dynamic meaning when there is no war. They are not dependent on the local event, since the disrelation may be universal, and the airman's unschooled eye be also the eye of the profoundest scholar.

Charles E. Butler's *Cut Is the Branch,* to which Archibald MacLeish writes a preface, is more nearly what might be called a "human" document. The soldier is haunted by a blue bowl, a lady's glove, and other items.

Allan Dowling's *A Poet's Youth* shows, if nothing else, the flagrant mistake of viewing life as a whole, which can be dismissed under the guise of a truism and a cup of flame. The word, he tells us, is the exceeding flower that always justifies. Justifies what? Dowling expects agreement as to the immutability of the ideas he proposes—the word God, for example, and no further exploration necessary. Beauty, too, is truth.

Now comes Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk of Our Lady of Gethsemani, Kentucky, a state noted for its dancing Methodists and hard-shelled Baptists, all very beautiful. Thomas Merton writes as if he were two men, a Catholic monk and a man of this world. The latter is, it would seem, the stronger poet. His poetry somehow escapes the limits he has set on thought. For that reason alone, it makes a fascinating study, one worthy of our devotion. God, who should be the immutable whole, is also a mystery, we find, and so in no position to cast illumination on the mystery of things. God is only a support and substitute for the low probability of each single case. Merton, in fact, is at his best when he sees God as having entered so much into the relative as to be almost if not totally indistinct from it. Merton is at his best when the train rails scream like demented ladies, there being no God to speak of—when, to employ an image not his own, it would seem that the iron bridge cannot support the weight of a single rose. In fact, things do act, religiously or unreligiously, in an unprincipled way, as when all the pieces of the mosaic earth get up and fly away like birds. The flight of the alone to the alone! Disorder becomes the only order. Merton's poetry, rich on many levels, drawing from many unlikely sources, both the Catholic Church and voodooism, is chiefly significant for its sense of the individual, the lonely, the fact that the total aspect of nature at any given moment is unique and will never occur again. Perhaps the extreme of mysticism is in this case the extreme of skepticism. Otherwise, with a greeting-card monotony, the trees bow down like girls wearing white dresses for the morning's first communion. And there are other dangerous impersonations, not always effective, which doubtless all of us are inclined to be guilty of, in one way or another.

Two old New England farmers, a little frost-bitten, are once more

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leaning across a fence discussing, according to Robert Frost, a dubious territory, our human life, what it is all about. One old farmer wears the thin masque of a baroque but perhaps cancerous God, the other of Job. Frost, whom the homespun have loved for his homespun philosophy, is not the man he seems, is the joker in the philosophic pack, strangely enough. *A Masque of Reason* shows Job as continuing the first debate with God, and after a thousand years of inexperience, alas, God is as inept as when he spoke out of the whirlwind. In fact, more helpless. He has lost his arrogance. He still gives no teleological explanation of his own being or Job's. The chances are simply that life is life, and that it will continue just that, in spite of self-superseding sciences, institutions, committees, men, women, the masque of our reason, the two-party system, and what not. The data of this world never were and never will be understandable, according to God and Frost. What Frost distrusts as if it were poison is theoretical reason itself and the vacuum in which it operates. There can be no progress. Our progress is more and more toward less and less. Individuals, from Frost's point of view, a biased one, are the only reality. Enough said. Individuals are indefinable because they are made up of matter and its excrudescences, even boils, Frost shows, indeed, the cosmic imposture of God, and the spectre of cause as banished, along with the mists which it inhabited—also, alas, the imposture of man, a sad joke. Any originality the earth shows must be attributed, in fact, to the nonexistent Devil—the Devil is man—and to false premises. At that point or thereabouts, Frost ceases thinking about the whole damned subject. There is nothing more to think of, evidently, but how to make both ends meet.

Herbert Read's *A World Within a War* is the work of a man who has accepted, with large generosity of intellect and emotion, both the challenge of Hamlet's derangement and our responsibility, like Prospero's, to create a better dream within the translucent dream. Read is in the deepest sense a dignified humanist of the first water. Writing the most loving poetry, he criticizes our belief without action, our action without thought, the blind intervention of years without design, our lethargy. The fault is both in ourselves and in our stars—all things being mortal. The universe and landscape of small flowers and birds, both are haunted by our presence—and our death, he realizes, may be the death of all. How we have been torn and fretted by vain energies! How, moreover, the darting images of eye and ear are veiled in the webs of memory, drifts of words that deaden the subtle manuals of sense. On man, the pitiful incident, the cosmos depends for its meaning. Man is the Atlas, more or less. God, too, may walk in an English garden. Of consciousness and its hazards, Read writes implicitly and explicitly, even of the most delicate nuances before the slow material kiss of death which he sees aggrandized in a time of war.

Last but not least, Conrad Aiken, his poem, *The Soldier*. This is a

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history of war but not merely a description of historical forces, the fact that men are through and through historically conditioned. There are basic imperfections to be taken cognizance of, the inchoate legions of autumn leaves, for example. Wilder than the huge blue Ethiops whirling in lionskins, wilder than the cries of camels and elephants at man-made war, is the fact of the basically cruel isolation of one thing from another. On this theme, Aiken enlarges. The poem illuminates, it may be said, the agony of what it is to be a fragment. Aiken entertains, however, the hopefulness that our future will not be like our past, that there will be a blissful divergence, a breaking away from the long history of blood and tears and falling leaves. History, we are to believe, is resolved when the will turns upward, up the spiral of light, ever to the brighter stairway and doorway of light where is the love implicit, impartible, the clear heart, the divine guest and host of mankind. Such a faith cannot be argued with, naturally.

MARGUERITE YOUNG

A MEAGER CROP

INTERIM. *By R. C. Hutchinson. Farrar & Rinehart.* $2.00.
THE FOLDED LEAF. *By William Maxwell. Harper & Bros.* $2.50.
THE CRADLE WILL FALL. *By Stephen Seley. Harcourt, Brace & Co.* $2.00.
THE MUSIC IS GONE. *By LeGarde S. Doughty. Duell, Sloan & Pearce.* $2.50.
THE BRICK FOXHOLE. *By Richard Brooks. Harper & Bros.* $2.50.
DARKLY FLOWS THE RIVER. *By Lt. Commander John Macdonald, R.C.N.V.R. Coward McCann.* $2.50.

IF THERE IS, for these six novels, any denominator which may be called common, apart from their size it is, possibly, a certain density of seriousness and intensity of sentiment. But here no more than in Rodin's statue does an attitude of thoughtfulness imply ripeness of wisdom, nor do a set of characters who *feel* very hard determine the emotional stature of a novel. None of these books has a "big" subject, none is a novel of ideas, none requires or invites either a second reading or profound attention, and only one concerns characters whose existence is on a fairly high level of consciousness.

It is exactly this one, *Interim,* by the Englishman R. C. Hutchinson, which is the most generally interesting. Superficially, it is the story of a soldier's brief but deep knowledge of a family blundered on, worked and suffered with, and after a few revelatory visits to the rather unusual household, lost, except to memory, through death by disease and war, and sacrificial isolation. Though fragmentary, the experience is none the less rich for him, because of the kind of insight granted him. The fact

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that the soldier comes into their lives at a climactic point, that they are all of phenomenal articulateness, enjoy great freedom in discourse, and that the play of emotional atmosphere is of a wartime compression, makes all this seem possible, and even persuasive. The narrator himself is a kind of invisible man, through whom we see the sharp personalities of his sudden friends, and a country life routine that has an authority arising from both perception and love. The virtues of the book lie almost entirely in the quality of feeling, and the very pleasant and literate handling of the language, notable for its cadence and sensuous impressionism.

We move from this novel, which has a certain moral, semi-intellectual climate, however inadequate, to a job at once more solid and more tenuous. William Maxwell, in this inexorable pursuit of the progress of a compulsive emotional attachment between two adolescent boys, has given us also the picture of collegiate America, and of fumbling, insecure adults. The publication of this novel has occasioned a small ecstasis in the more frequent press. In one way it *is* an impressive piece of work, for Mr. Maxwell is a very careful, incisive, and conscious writer, who scorns to throw words about brightly for a big effect. Instead, moving about his characters on little cat feet, he proceeds to keep an honest and sometimes acute record of this relationship, in itself neither unusual nor of profound interest, and manages, both by an exploration of its wider implications and by a genuine tenderness, to command considerable attentiveness and interest.

His narrative method is in the main naturalistic,—he operates in the tradition of a type of *New Yorker* story which we are all too familiar, a type which Mr. Maxwell has openly admired and which, in his role as an editor of that magazine, he has presumably encouraged. The tone is very matter-of-fact, and details of decor, habit, gesture are invested with fairly enormous psychological significance (for reasons not always cogent) in a great, deliberate buildup to an often very minor irony or perception. It is a standardized formula for subtlety. It is a pity that Mr. Maxwell, whose writing has a nice, unadorned straightforwardness and intelligence, should so falter in some of his most important accessory figures and in his jejune denouement, in which we are asked to believe in a victory of maturity and independence that arises from an act of the opposite nature.

Stephen Seley's *The Cradle Will Fall* is a book of tiny proportion, making no pretensions to a larger than personal view, and yet, in his urgency to record the special mark made on the psyche of a child by the death of his mother, he catches the family and milieu (lower middle-class Jewish) with sharpness and even some freshness. Though he has immersed himself rather prodigiously in the emotions of a boy in bewilderment and first loss, this is more an emotional tour de force than a literary achievement; we may grudgingly acknowledge its hundred accuracies, but wish for something which engages the mind more fully

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One may even, perhaps, think of this book as a literary sneeze,—it is natural, normal, probably a relief to Mr. Seley; whether it portends something more significant, whether it is to have context in a career, it is too early to tell.

LeGarde S. Doughty's *The Music Is Gone* is about a Southern country doctor, thoughtful, honest, intransigent and gentle (a familiar mold) and though it has a thin single line of story, it is essentially made up of a series of those colorful incidents in the life of a doctor, told in good, homey, placid style. It is not only too late for this *kind* of thing to be given out as a serious novel, but as an individual work it suffers from a disastrous paucity of interest, wit and pace, and an overabundance of sentimentality, bad taste and nonsense.

Richard Brooks' angry intentions promise more than he furnishes. In his preface he is all wrought up about the state of tension and disintegration of soldiers at camps in the United States, and approaches his thesis with the air of a man who fully understands the spiritual brutality of the existing conditions in what might be called that non-world, but his book is mostly fast melodrama with sensational elements, that is only remotely related to his stated purpose. It has a certain raucous excitement, and a grimness of determination not to avoid the ugly and perverse, but, documented and fervent though it may be, it is not good.

Darkly The River Flows is very fancy and funny, though the author himself, his characters and situations, have not a grain of humor. All is stark and terrible, all grandiose psychopathology and no intelligence, yet with a woof of fierce romance that makes it essentially a love story. Lt. Macdonald, who must surely make lists of colorful emotive words *pour le sport,* tells the story of two brothers and their neurotic conflicts. One rides people as he rides his wild horse, the other cringes and sulks, finally expressing his sickness by a symbolic sexual possession of his long-dead mother. The Lieutenant has gone to a progressive school, but he is a little naive about telling us what he learned there of reeling and writhing.

GERTRUDE BUCKMAN

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Variety

Poor Little Rich Girls

THE PAMPERED, fast living, rebellious girl who became a literary convention in the novels of the twenties has a curious way of turning up in current books, perhaps indicating that this highly standardized female has an inexhaustible appeal to both writers and readers. Two characters in recent and serious fiction come to mind: Hopestill Mather in Jean Stafford's *Boston Adventure* and Sue Murdock in Robert Penn Warren's *At Heaven's Gate.* Though Hopestill Mather has a vague interest in psychoanalysis and Sue Murdock feels profound capitalist guilt, these conditions do not in any way lift them out of the basic pattern from which they derive. Both characters are a sort of hodgepodge of the romantically wayward women supposed to have followed the last war. They echo Fitzgerald, Lady Brett in Hemingway's novel, the pleasure-loving women in Huxley, and all the "bad girls" of lesser fiction. Yet the most remarkable thing is the similarity between Hopestill Mather and Sue Murdock themselves. (By this time, the poor little rich girl has become such a commonplace in fiction that each new one inevitably recalls nothing so much as her most recent predecessor.) Their actions are predictable on almost every score, because their aggressive and theatrical bitterness can only lead them into expected situations: drunkenness, illicit pregnancy, self-destruction. The destruction seems to be a payment for their wealth and privilege—a fate one suspects they picked up from the proletarian novelists, rather than from life.

It is not accidental that Hopestill Mather and Sue Murdock are prodigious horsewomen. When we first meet Sue Murdock she is standing beside a paddock. This single fact is an important clue to her spoiled, fearless nature. For some reason, women in novels do not ride horseback casually and Sue Murdock is no exception. In fact, she becomes so deeply attached to the horse that she has it sent to her school in the East. Nor is it accidental that Hopestill Mather should seek her death on her horse. Since these animals have become the symbol of repressed sexuality and the mastery over them suggests power over men, we are quite prepared that they should be involved in all real and symbolic violence. Kay Boyle makes extensive use in her work of the symbolic meaning of sports and physical skills. Her novella, *The Crazy Hunter,* is almost exclusively concerned with a young girl's feeling for a blind horse. The girl's revolt against her family, her adolescent sexual urges are centered in her fierce affection for the doomed animal. One thinks here of the complex, and at the same

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time stereotyped, emotions that surround the literary use of the airplane. Even before it was attached to war, the airplane had come to represent man's love of danger, the death wish, sexual repression and all the lesser demands of powerful egos.

The ability to consume rather startling amounts of alcohol is another inevitable attribute of these harassed female characters. The alcohol is nothing in itself; it is merely a further symbolic act of irresistible wickedness designed to set these women off from the rest of the world. Just as the maintenance of stables suggests elegance and wealth, the alcohol must be associated with a substantial background in order to have the proper psychological content. A poor girl flopping around in a drunken stupor would simply arouse a response of pity or, perhaps, humor. Yet when these rebellious daughters of the ruling class drink it is evidence of their strength as creatures above the demands of society as well as their weakness in being pawns of emotional insecurity. Sue Murdock says of herself, ". . . It is one thing little Sue can do. She can drink a great deal of whisky. She can drink a great deal of gin. Her capacity is truly remarkable . . . " In *Boston Adventure,* Hopestill Mather expresses her revolt against the stuffiness of her background by saying, "Five minutes of this sort of thing and I'm at the end of my tether. Don't you think we should have cocktails?" Through drinking, these decadent heroines take on the quality of masculinity that was so common to the haunted flappers of the twenties. The *animus* of these women has triumphed to such a degree that the reader knows instinctively there can be no man equal to the task of conquering them wholly. However, the one hope they have is that salvation may be achieved by masochistic contact with those despised by their own world.

Both Sue Murdock and Hopestill Mather feel an immense need for *slumming.* They must have affairs with men beneath them either in income or position. Since Jerry Calhoun in *At Heaven's Gate* is climbing up from poverty, we take it as quite natural that Sue Murdock, the financier's daughter, should respond to him. In this boy she can crystallize her rejection of her father's economic success. Hopestill Mather becomes involved with a tasteless parvenu: the antithesis of all she might have been expected to choose. In addition to these men in whom the fundamental conflicts are expressed, there is a constant urge toward Bohemianism. The Bohemian friends are a mere foil for the heroine's background. They are meant to antagonize the family. The interesting thing here is that the women themselves, without any particular talent or drive, manage to live much more intensely than do the Bohemians with whom they associate. Perhaps the hidden psychological reason for this is that the reader expects a certain amount of hard luck, danger and dissatisfaction to be the lot of those in average cir-

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cumstances; but, when the high-strung, literary siren deliberately throws herself into the artistic or social underworld, we assume she is doing something daring. In assuming this, one accepts money and social position as the most important things in life and it is with breathless anxiety that he watches these madcaps throw away such privileges. Without that assumption, the conflicts don't mean much. In having relations with lesser men, these girls express the most violent part of their nature. They are extraordinarily fierce about it. "Oh, love me, Jerry, love me hard," Sue Murdock says. And Hopestill Mather, pondering her tempestuous nature, says, "There's probably a devil in me, one straight from hell like those in the Salem witches my ancestors used to burn."

In the midst of all her difficulties, the stubborn, egocentric heroine maintains a hard cynicism that reminds one of those movies in which tall, sleek, intrepid females go through the most appalling experiences without batting an eye. We know the type well. She is found in ladies' magazine fiction and countless popular novels as an out and out villainess. In more serious fiction there is an attempt to make the heroines understandable, if not forgiveable. They are presented as truly homeless, because they have too much spirit and "devil" to fit into their inherited environment. At the same time the hang-overs from that environment make any other life almost impossible. There is only one solution.

In *Boston Adventure* and *At Heaven's Gate* the girls must die. Society seeks retribution from those who have played a false role by drifting back and forth between the classes. They are doomed, also, because being rich and spoiled carries with it, in fiction at least, a certain amount of cruel arrogance which ultimately leads others to seek a cruel revenge. (Sue Murdock laughs at Slim Sarrett and he, later, kills her. Hopestill Mather subjects Dr. McAllister to the dreadful indignity of marrying a woman made pregnant by another man and he tortures her until she must kill herself.) This is irony of a mediocre and traditional sort for which the reader's mind is well prepared by romantic fiction. Irony of quite another sort is seen in William Faulkner's, *Sanctuary*. Temple Drake, though less articulate, is also pursued by fabulous demons of the flesh. We last see Temple, very much alive, walking through the Luxembourg Gardens with her father. She is yawning and powdering her nose.

ELIZABETH HARDWICK

Report from the Academy:

The Experimental College

I ONCE heard T. S. Eliot say that young writers should avoid academic life and earn their living in some completely unliterary concern such as an insurance company. Wallace Stevens is one of the few who have acted on this advice; most of the reputable poets in America today, and a fair propor-

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tion of other literary men, are college professors. When we realize what an extraordinary number of PR readers and contributors are attached to an academy we are bound, since PR is the least "academic" of the literary periodicals, to recognise that there never was so intimate a tie between living culture (such as it is) and our institutions of higher learning (such as they are). In these conditions it might possibly be interesting to hear from some of the writers what is going on. That, as I understand it, is the purpose of the PR "Reports from the Academy." Here is my report.

At some point between high-school and entering the teaching profession the academician is deeply disillusioned about the higher learning in America. He expected campus life to be highminded, if rather aloof; he discovers freshman English and campus politics. Of the possible responses to this situation the simplest and most uncompromising is a complete rejection of the present system of education and participation in an attempt at educational reform. This was my response. It will be of interest to those who are wondering what function the experimental college has had, or could have, in our present state of things. The years following the last war witnessed a great vogue of educational experiment. As this war draws to a close many will be wondering if we are to have new Bertrand Russell schools and the like. I offer the case of Black Mountain College as an *exemplum*.

Black Mountain College was founded in 1933 by John Andrew Rice, a stormy petrel of education who had unfairly been fired from Rollins College, Florida, an institution which also considered itself advanced. In a summer hotel, otherwise unoccupied nine months in the year, Rice gathered together something under a hundred students and a handful of teachers, some of whom had followed him from Rollins. The story of the first five or six years has been told by Rice in his autobiography *I Came Out of the 18th Century*. They culminated in Rice's being driven out by a number of his colleagues. At the same time one of the wealthy friends upon whom the college depended for its existence provided the college with grounds and some rather rickety buildings a couple of miles from the summer hotel near Black Mountain, North Carolina. For one school year the main task both of students and faculty was to build with their own hands a building to study in. This unusual task was performed—not indeed to the extent of completing the building but at least to the extent of providing shelter for all. Primitive shacks dotted around a dammed-up swamp ironically named Lake Eden served as student dormitories and faculty houses.

In this setting, which may be represented as idyllic or barbarous, informal or messy, refreshing or inconvenient, Arcadian or Bohemian, according to the predilections of the critic, Black Mountain College worked out its own scheme of education. It is nothing if not

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heterodox in form. There is no board of trustees, no president or other head with constitutional power to hire and fire, no donor with a controlling interest in college policies. A constitution places all decisive power in the hands of the faculty. Business is discussed and transacted by elected boards and committees on which the student body is represented. Though the superior numbers of the students do not give them a controlling voice in college affairs, the fact that they are on all important governing bodies does mean that every issue, except the academic progress of the students themselves, is discussed and passed on by them. Within this scheme of government Black Mountain worked out a 'way of life' which has much to commend it, especially in its omissions. There are no organized sports, no fraternities or sororities, none of those institutions or *mores* which on so many campuses serve to prolong adolescence and fortify Philistinism. Black Mountain's well-known fondness for lame ducks has its partial justification in the fact that its students are immune from the philistine pressures which elsewhere make life hell for the sensitive and the weak. Black Mountain knows few hard-drinking, hard-whoring, jaloppy-driving hearties and even fewer giggling, over-painted, movie-starrish, jitterbugging girls who spend the week waiting for Saturday night. The Black Mountain 'way of life' is a way of endless activity scheduled morning, afternoon, and evening, weekday and week-end. Instead of sports there is farmwork, maintenance work, building, typing, entertaining. These things go on every afternoon, and in the evenings a steady stream of lectures, concerts, and meetings takes place.

The achievements of an educational program not dictated by footballers, rotarians, and oil magnates are considerable. Education is run by educationists. Furthermore the smallness of the experimental college is a tremendous asset. Where, as at Black Mountain, there is a teacher to every three students the advantage is evident: intimacy between student and teacher can be the means to the most concentrated and lively interchange that any education could afford. Where the faculty are a separate world the students continue their high-school habit of avoiding study, boasting of idleness, and the like; at Black Mountain, on the other hand, diligence is *de rigueur*. The good taste of the art and music teachers permeates the community. Walk through the campus any afternoon and you will hear a good deal of music from student rooms, but no musical trash. Look into the rooms and you will see a good many pictures, but no pin-up girls or signed portraits of Clark Gable. At Black Mountain quite ordinary students acquire a certain taste in the visual and auditory arts.

For the place has always had its quota of highly gifted and zealous teachers. Perhaps Rice himself was the most brilliant; even his enemies granted that he was an extra-

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ordinary and magnetic personality. He used to shatter his pupils' illusions, disturb their complacency and send them on their way greatly changed people. The college has believed in the peculiar efficacy of music and art, and the teaching in these fields has always been ardently partisan, anti-academic, iconoclastic and personal. A Bauhaus man preaches a pasionate evangel: art history is the bunk; art criticism is gossip; the student must learn to use the materials himself, become himself "related" to forms and colors; the Graeco-Roman tradition is overrated; forget history, think of nothing but form and color, and you will prefer Byzantine, primitive and modern work. The music teachers have been equally enterprising: you are more likely to hear Perotinus or Schoenberg as you walk round the campus than Tschaikovsky and Chopin; there is little music "appreciation," that unctuous monster; ear-training and musical technique replace and surpass all that.

Black Mountain College has done many remarkable things. It has, so to speak, made the blind to see and the deaf to hear. Students there sometimes seem to grow in front of your very eyes. Timid spoilt children have turned into lively, purposive people; obstreperous spoilt children have turned into controlled and disciplined people. Graduating students have sometimes surprised their examiners—chosen from the faculty of 'regular' universities—not so much by their erudition as by their keen interest in their field. Some have

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used the academic freedom of the place—few compulsory courses, few tests, few requirements, few rules—to pass far beyond an undergraduate standard of work. In some ways the faculty have a good time of it too. You teach whatever you wish, and you have in your classes only students who chose your course and who desperately want to know what you have to say (and who may even try to have you fired if you're a bore). Black Mountain has gone beyond what are considered the functions of a seat of learning. It has created a pattern of living—"community" is the magic word—in which startling things happen. In a day of mass organization, a day of gigantism and machines, it shows that one may try to approach the individual as an individual, a thing more often talked of than done. At a time when one is tempted to give up the fine dreams of the liberal philosophers of educations, Black Mountain affords glimpses of possibilities.

In my opinion, however, the possibilities will have to be realized elsewhere or not at all, for Black Mountain has defects which outweigh its merits. Though any brief enumeration of these defects will by its very brevity distort and oversimplify the truth, I will avoid the alternative of saying nothing by specifying three schools of thought and practice which have prevented Black Mountain being the most successful educational experiment in America. They are: the Progressivists, the Platonists, and the Primitivists.

According to *Time,* Black Mountain is "progressive education's most famous outpost," but PR readers should be warned, in case they are out of contact with the educational world, that Progressivism is no longer Deweyism; by this time it is about as far from Dewey as the Pope is from Jesus. In the form in which it cropped up at Black Mountain Progressivism was a crude body of negative and rather anarchistic doctrines such as that good education results from having no rules, no examinations, no punctuality and the like. Latterly this body of doctrine has been more popular with the student body than with the faculty, for the latter, like all tired revolutionaries, have been growing steadily more puritan and disciplinarian. On both student body and faculty, however, there did persist much suspicion of learning (called "book learning" or "mere learning") based upon that old chestnut of a doctrine that Education is for Life and upon the assumption that dilettantism or boy-scoutishness is somehow more to be identified with Life than "mere knowledge." When students are discouraged from being studious and critical (in the interest of the active and the creative) the result is sometimes a new brand of philistinism, sometimes just the old brand of intellectual sloth, and always an abdication of one of the main functions of higher education, namely, the training of the intellect to the point where a man can reject what is bogus. Un-

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happily the "creative" writing, painting, etc., of the normal student, being itself bogus, or at least limited, is actually dangerous as training if not constantly accompanied by critical training. And Black Mountain has always been provincial and out-of-touch in all critical studies—literary, philosophical and social.

In education we have at all times to turn attention from the pretty phrases—Life not Mere Learning, for instance,—to the actualities which they produce or are meant to justify. In practice Life not Learning means a fingering of the personality which leads to neurosis and thoughts of suicide. In a way the great pride of Black Mountain education is the detailed attention which not only the work but also the daily living of the student gets from the faculty. Yet this close and expert attention is damaging both to the watchers and to the watched. The watchers become unhealthily inquisitive like the prying neighbors in a Scots Presbyterian village; the watched grow introspective or rebellious.

But few of the Black Mountaineers like the word Progressive, and in later years a philosophy made its appearance which was directly counter to Dewey, to vulgarised Progressivism, and indeed to all liberal schemes. This was Platonism. The experimental college was to turn out philosopher-kings and was to endorse not democracy but True Democracy, that is, anything but majority rule. A wistful note entered into the discussion. Were not the masses a menace? An essay

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was written which referred to the masses as "the great number of the uncalled" and asked us to trust rather to "our compass, our fate and our fortune" in seeking a new order. There was definitely to be a new order, but it would be discovered by the pure contemplation of the pure and contemplative few. In other words the shadow of Mortimer J. Adler had fallen across Black Mountain College, and positivism, materialism, science, pragmatism and communism became bogies.

More powerful than either Progressivism or Platonism was Primitivism. In the early days students read a book called *Flight from the City* and acclaimed the Simple Life. Even since, a gospel of manual labor was preached, not in Marx's sense but in that of William Morris or the later Tolstoi. Physical labor combined with study was the synthesis which our world needed. Contact with the craftsman's materials would sensitize the individual so that he would gain in the control of himself and his environment. There was much talk of Organic Growth, but the higher type of man which the synthesis was to engender did not appear, and the sensitized individual in Black Mountain as elsewhere frequently controlled neither himself nor his environment.

One of the tenets of educational Primitivism is that modern specialization is wicked, and that, instead of having a man for each job, each man should do a bit of everything: furniture making, farming, mining, tree-felling, entertainment, as well as teaching, advising, lecturing and endless conferring in meetings. Especially should he take over the functions of the administration which otherwise will be a non-educational body controlling education. The first result of this line of thought and action is sheer disorder in the whole organization and administration of the college. The second is arbitrary power: for those who choose to devote themselves to administration become the official administrators and thus, in a college with no president and no trustees, they become the bosses too. If the same people also secure the donations which keep the college going their power is permanent.

Bureaucratic chaos and highly centralized control: the elaborate forms of an extreme democracy and the reality of a simple autocracy: the formula is familiar. The Black Mountain system, simple to the point of naivete in theory, is cumbersome to the point of impossibility in practice. Since there are so few set procedures, let alone rules, there has to be a discussion to decide upon procedure and principle before anything can be done. It is as if a parliament should have to open every session by discussing and finally framing a new constitution. Sometimes group A tells group B that it does not agree with the fundamental principles of the college, though there is no record of those principles, and members of group A cannot agree as to what they are. Since in addition Progressivists, Platonists and Primitivists all agree

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that voting is a barbarous custom and that unanimity should be attempted, deadlock is inevitably frequent.

So much for the different schools of thought. All schools seem to have in common two important things: an exaggerated opinion of what the college might be and an inability to make the college actually work in any even half-satisfactory fashion.

The exaggeration of the role of education is something all our modern reformers have in common. Dewey says: "Education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform." Hutchins preaches a "spiritual revolution" to which "the only way . . . is through education." But the level of Black Mountain's educational panaceism is examplified in one of its champions, Mr. Louis Adamic, who once (*Harpers,* April 1936) described the portentous process by which a Black Mountain student, passing through the dark night of despair and isolation of his few months there, is spiritually reunited with the group. One of the happy results which Mr. Adamic reported was this: "Some of those who had been there longest can also exchange complicated communications without saying a word. The lift of an eyebrow to them is a sentence."

So ridiculously ambitious and Utopian in intention, the experimental college is limited and inharmonious in its results. Personal antipathies occur, of course, wherever there are men; group differences emerge wherever there are aggregations of men; and no campus can hope to be free of universally human troubles. The peculiar difficulty of the experimental college is that small numbers and community living make of every personal irritation a communal fever, a fever which is caught and carried by the students as well as by the faculty. If the students have a voice in all affairs, and if faculty and students live cooped up in a valley miles from anywhere, people are going to get on each others nerves, the more so if they consist of nervous, 'progressive' adolescents and highly individualized intellectuals, each with a very definite set of his own theories which he wishes to try out. Black Mountain never works smoothly for long at a

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time. Somebody is always leaving in a huff or being pushed out. Occasionally there is a splash-up crisis. Other activities are suspended or at least ruined and the community devotes itself to weeks of uninterrupted feuding.

The atmosphere of such a college makes the students grow up in some ways, for they are drawn at once into educational controversy, but those who want an education suffer. At the best of times the Black Mountain faculty is small, and many fields of study are not represented on it. Inadequate pay (your keep plus $5 to $25 per month per person) and constant trouble cause such a rapid turnover of teachers that a student is never sure how long he can study any subject. History breaks off at 1669, as the ex-professor runs for the train. A major in French has to finish up at Middlebury when the only French teacher is hurriedly removed. So it goes. A course here and a course there are brilliant, but nothing can be planned ahead of time. In fact some of the Primitivists say that poverty and an atmosphere of crisis are the making of the place. They are certainly of its essence. In eleven years less than thirty students have graduated.

How shall one sum up such an undertaking? Up to now the shrewdest judge, though PR readers may be surprised, is Bernard De Voto, who in reply to Adamic wrote in *Harpers*: "It sounds like Charles Fourier to me. . . . Mr. Adamic expects Black Mountain to multiply; but its predecessors multiplied by fission, by division, and that is the history of experimental societies and colleges in America. Black Mountain itself came about by secession . . ." The latest I hear is that Black Mountain College has only about forty students and that a group of ex-Black Mountaineers in New York is thinking of making another try of it elsewhere.

I sincerely wish them luck. But they should ponder the question whether the defects of Black Mountain and other experimental colleges are all accidental and avoidable or inherent and inevitable. Black Mountain has had many accidental failings. But I do not think the conflict of personalities, for example, can be numbered among them. One need not attack particular persons. The root error of all builders of special rural communities for the improvement of mankind is the same: they overestimate the extent to which we can in these ways escape and surpass our world. The economic problem, for instance, is not evaded at Black Mountain. Policy is still economically determined, only by the money-getters, not by the money-givers. An educational system is part of a social system. As a determinant it is weak; it is itself largely determined. The writers who are now located in the "regular" colleges and who may have wondered if they should not join the educational *avant-garde* of the experimental college can, in my opinion, stay where they are with a good conscience.

ERIC RUSSELL BENTLEY

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Dissent on Aragon

We feel that it is necessary to comment upon one of the authors cited by Mr. Stephen Spender in the essay he has contributed to this issue. He speaks of "a literature of resistance, of hope, of faith," and he finds it exemplified in the poetry of Aragon, Eluard, Jouve, Emanuel and others. Now whatever the merit of the poetry Aragon wrote during the occupation of France, the fact is that Mr. Spender has raised a further issue, that of the political role of the poet. No matter what the content of Aragon's poetry, and no matter what the extent of his aid to the resistance movement, his recent and utterly groundless attack on André Gide as a collaborationist is certainly not the kind of activity Mr. Spender has in mind when he asks that authors "recognize their responsibility to society." The truth is that Aragon, in his capacity as editor and general factotum in the Communist literary world, has for years now carried on pogroms against all writers who have dared to criticize Stalin's regime. Surely it is not in this way that authors can "create an ideal above politics, which political movements should seek to interpret in action." In fact, such activities are precisely the opposite: the obedience of the author to a political party and the surrendering of every ideal superior to politics.

The Editors

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Contributors:

IGNAZIO SILONE, author *Fontemara, Bread and Wine* and other works, has returned to liberated Italy.

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE is one of the leading writers of the new generation in France. A play of his will be produced on Broadway next season.

ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS teaches English at Smith College. He has written fiction and criticism.

JAMES LAUGHLIN'S first volume of verse will appear this fall.

LAWRENCE DURRELL, author of a novel entitled *The Black Book,* has lived in Greece for several years and is now reported to be in Cairo.

KARL SHAPIRO'S new volume of verse, *Essay on Rime,* will be published by Reynal & Hitchcock in September. He has recently returned from the Pacific to this country.

STEPHEN SPENDER is the well-known English poet and critic.

H. J. KAPLAN, whose story "The Mohammedans" was published in PARTISAN REVIEW for May-June 1943, has been working with the Office of War Information for several years.

PETER TAYLOR'S stories have appeared in *The Sewanee Review* and other literary magazines. He is now in the army overseas.

BARBARA DEMING, a graduate of Bennington College, has worked for the film division of the Library of Congress.

JOSEPH HANNELE GOLDSMITH, a young writer now living in New York City, is at present writing a play about Aaron Burr.

HANNAH ARENDT has appeared in previous issues of PARTISAN REVIEW. She was a student of philosophy and political history in pre-Hitler Germany and now lives in New York City.

ELIZABETH HARDWICK'S first novel, *The Ghostly Lover,* was published this spring by Harcourt, Brace.

SAUL ROSENZWEIG practices psychiatry at the Western State Psychiatric Hospital of Pittsburgh. His study of Henry James appeared in the Fall, 1944 issue of PARTISAN REVIEW.

MARGUERITE YOUNG'S latest book is *Angel in the Forest.*

GERTRUDE BUCKMAN is a young writer whose reviews have appeared in several New York newspapers and periodicals.

ERIC RUSSELL BENTLEY, who teaches at the University of Minnesota, is the author of *A Century of Hero Worship.*

PARTISAN REVIEW is published at 45 Astor Place, New York 3, N. Y.

PARTISAN REVIEW is published as a quarterly. Subscription: $2 yearly; Canada $2.40 and other foreign countries, $2.40. All payments from foreign countries must be made either by U. S. money orders or by checks payable in U.S. currency or $0.75 added for collection charges. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Copyright July, 1945 by PARTISAN REVIEW. Reentered as second-class matter, January 20, 1940, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

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